This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NAL
TRANSATLANT

Transatlantic Tales

"A DEBTOR TO PLEASURE."

No. 34. Quarterly.

TALES

FROM

TOWN TOPICS.

DECEMBER, 1899.

NEW YORK:
TOWN TOPICS PUBLISHING COMPANY,
208 FIFTH AVE. AND 1128 BROADWAY.

Fiction, American

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
2829B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1930 L

COPYRIGHT, 1899,
BY
TOWN TOPICS PUBLISHING COMPANY

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A Debtor to Pleasure. (*Novelette.*)	7
Muriel. (*Poem.*)	154
To Raphael. (*Poem.*)	155
Forgiven. (*Joke.*)	157
Name Has an Ominous Sound. (*Joke.*)	157
The Only Explanation. (*Joke.*)	158
The Adage Comes True. (*Verses.*)	158
A Round-Up. (*Story.*)	159
A Nice Layout. (*Joke.*)	175
An Early Riser. (*Joke.*)	176
No Outside Interference. (*Joke.*)	176
A Love Story. (*Poem.*)	177
The Story of William. (*Satire.*)	178
The Difference. (*Joke.*)	178
A Freak of Nature. (*Story.*)	179

PAGE

A Technical Error. (*Joke.*) 193
The Early Bird. (*Joke.*) 194
Worse Off Than Ever. (*Joke.*) 194
To Them All. (*Poem.*) 195
Over a Chafing-Dish. (*Poem.*) 196
Making Up the Great Sunday World. (*Burlesque.*) 197
Jeannette. (*Poem.*) 202
Rollo at Golf. (*Story.*) 203
Comparative Wisdom. (*Joke.*) 213
Not the Right Man. (*Joke.*) 214
Poor George. (*Joke.*) 214
The Folly of Her Ways. (*Story.*) . . . 215
Sensitive on That Point. (*Joke.*) 222
Fate's Practical Joke. (*Story.*) 223
My Briarwood. (*Poem.*) 229
Advised. (*Joke.*) 230
No Alternative. (*Joke.*) 230
Good Friends to Virtue. (*Story.*) . . . 231
The Bachelor. (*Poem.*) 239
A Revised Version. (*Joke.*) 240
Inculcated. (*Joke.*) 240
A Valentine. (*Poem.*) 241
A Dream Dreamed Over. (*Poem.*) 242

PAGE

Le Prince S'Amuse. (*Sketch.*) 243

To a Coffee Cup. (*Poem.*) 245

The Fire Fiend. (*Satire.*) 246

The Tryst. (*Poem.*) 247

Instead of "Old Woman." (*Joke.*) 247

Right Up to Date. (*Joke.*) 248

True Philosophy. (*Verse.*) 248

Are You Disposed to INVEST or SPECULATE in

STOCKS AND BONDS?

Another period of ***great activity,*** with advancing prices, is at hand.
Now is the time to enter

WALL STREET.

Do not do so, however, without a good adviser.
It is the business of

Town Topics Financial Bureau

[ESTABLISHED 1899]

to investigate all Financial problems, to secure early news on stock movements and to advise its clients in their investments or speculations.

The Bureau's sources of ***INSIDE NEWS*** are unequaled; its ***ADVICE*** is always ***sincere*** and ***RELIABLE,*** because it dispassionately sees and sizes the situation from all standpoints, and is ***UNBIASED*** by interests or deals.

WE OPERATE NO ACCOUNTS and have no interest in the market. Our sole business is to furnish disinterested opinions and information.

Special attention given to the investigation of ***INVESTMENT SECURITIES,*** and to furnishing opinions thereon. We are also in a position to make special and exhaustive reports upon any and all of the new "Industrials." Whatever information is obtainable upon these properties is within our reach.

Read carefully the terms printed below and send check for one month's trial or for special report, as the case may be.

Address all communications to

TOWN TOPICS FINANCIAL BUREAU,

(TELEPHONE 262 BROAD.) EDISON BUILDING, 42 BROAD ST., NEW YORK.

SERVICE RATES ARE:

FIRST—For a single advice or opinion (by letter or telegram, as required) upon a stock-market question, or for an investigation and report upon a particular investment or speculative security, $10 (an advance subscription of $50 gives the privilege of twenty inquiries during a year).

SECOND—**Out-of-town** daily *telegraphic* service, including at least one telegram each day (early morning), daily letter, and privilege of inquiries at will, $40 per month.

THIRD—**Out-of-town** daily *letter* service, with occasional important telegrams and privileges of a reasonable number of special inquiries, $20 per month, or $50 for *three* months.

FOURTH—Daily *letter* service without privilege of telegrams or inquiries, $25 per year.

FIFTH—Regular Bulletin service in Wall Street district, $15 per month.

SIXTH—**A Special New York City service for business men and others above Fulton Street,** consists of: A telegram each morning sent at 8.30 o'clock, covering probable course of market for the day, and advice as to purchase or sale of particular stocks; also a telegram at midday when circumstances warrant it; also the regular daily letter at 3.30 P. M. (mailed to house address if desired); also privilege of inquiries at will by telegraph, telephone or letter. In this service we pay for the morning telegrams only; others at cost of subscriber. Terms, $45 per month.

ALL TELEGRAMS AT COST OF SUBSCRIBER, except as above indicated.

A DEBTOR TO PLEASURE.

BY

LOUISE WINTER.

CHAPTER I.

"LIFE is made up of corners," said the man.

"Corners?" repeated the girl.

"Yes. Each climax is a corner, to be turned carefully, lest we bruise our flesh against some sharp projection." He paused a moment, and then added conclusively, "and matrimony is the rock upon which most of us go to pieces."

She flushed. "Why do you say such things? You don't mean them."

"Don't I? Can you tell when I am in earnest? We should take life easily; it is a simple formula, but one you will never be able to follow. You are too serious, Lucille," and he added, "forgive me, —too pretty."

The color rose to her face, at this ending; and yet she deserved his praise, this young American girl.

A large hat shaded her face and subdued the rich tan of her complexion. Blue eyes, a little troubled now, a small, straight nose, a sensitive mouth disclosing two rows of white teeth and a daintily

rounded chin, made up a pleasing picture. The soft hair that waved back from her forehead was light brown in color and golden where the sun touched it. Her slender figure showed to advantage in her light summer gown and her brown hands were clasped nervously around the handle of a parasol. She was not a typical American girl, for in America there are many types, but a fair specimen of Northern girlhood giving promise of development into one of those women whose names are synonymous with all that is graceful and charming.

Young—she was barely twenty— ; eager to learn, desiring, rather than dreading, the unknown, she was an interesting companion to the man beside her.

His age was thirty-eight. He had lived rapidly and had reached a period of discontent. Without any near relatives, the possessor of a comfortable income and a member, by right of birth and good English ancestry, of the exclusive set of New York, Gerald Townsend had gone through life, joyous in the pleasure of the moment and careless of the future. He had spent his youth royally, denying himself nothing, until now he began to wonder if this was all life held. He looked forward to a middle-aged clubman's existence, with its round of dinners, an occasional ball and twelve long months in every year. It was not an alluring prospect and yet he had never regarded matrimony as offering a release from it.

He had known many women, had made love to many, and had in turn been often fascinated himself, but, when it had come to the crucial test, something on both sides had been found lacking, and he had turned from the mockery of love making in disgust. In person he was tall, broad shouldered and carried himself with easy grace. He was

clean shaven and his large firm mouth, with its well cut lips, and a square, determined chin were his most striking features. His eyes were dark and deeply set and his nose was long, broadening at the base, with sensitive nostrils, that plainly betokened the pride which was one of his chief characteristics.

It was a sultry day in August. The ocean stretching before them was scarcely moved by a ripple; the white shore spread for miles around and here and there rocks clustered. A calm was in the air and it penetrated to his brain as he lay on the sand, lazily watching the smoke curl up from his cigarette and disappear. But the girl at his side was irritated.

Ignoring his compliment, she sat thinking for some minutes, and then said: "If life is so disillusioning for men, why is it not so for women?"

"It is; only women soon learn to console themselves," he answered.

"Oh!" she drew her breath quickly, and her blue eyes filled with tears.

He turned his head at her sudden exclamation, and noted, with surprise, her troubled countenance.

"You are too sensitive, Lucille," he began quietly, "try to overcome it; if you do not, you will suffer more than is necessary. Learn that everything in this world is relative: good and evil, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain. Take what you can of the good, the joy and the pleasure, and don't go out of your way to look for the rest. It is a simple way, though almost too simple for women," and with a sigh of satisfaction at having settled the question, he relapsed into his recumbent position.

"Simple things for men are often complex things for women," she mused.

"Yes, for the simplest thing in the world is a

man's love, and the most complex thing is a woman's."

"There is your horrid cynicism again," she protested indignantly.

"Do not take me too seriously, Lucille. Do I strike you as cynical? I am afraid I am not the best companion in the world for a girl of twenty. Your character is forming now, and my hand ought to have little to do in building up a wall for you against the temptations of life. I am old and world weary, while you have all that is fairest and brightest before you. You have the love of a good man offered to you and, believe me, Lucille, the world has not many men as pure hearted as Jack Reyling. If you marry him he will worship you, and whatever you do will be right in his eyes, because you are his wife."

Lucille listened, with anger in her heart, and then despair entered her very soul as she realized how little she really was to him, seeing that he could so calmly discuss her marriage to another.

"You wish me to marry Jack?" she asked piteously.

The man beside her was roused at last.

"Wish you to marry him? No, Lucille, I am selfish enough to wish to keep you as my little friend, the one green spot in my barren life. To have you always where I can put out my hand and touch you; to know that I shall always have your sympathy; that, though you may not understand, you will never fail me. That is what I wish, but, good God! I am not selfish enough to ask it of you."

His face paled, his eyes glowed and his whole frame quivered with the excitement of the moment and then, before she had time to recover her scattered senses, the passion left him.

"Have I frightened you? Come, let us go back to the house; it is growing late," and he rose quickly, and then helped her to her feet.

They walked back in silence, both busy with their thoughts; the girl more puzzled than ever, the man cursing himself for a fool. Why had he not left her alone? She was so charming with her assumption of worldly wisdom and her innocence of heart.

Fortunately the piazza was deserted and, as they reached the hall, Gerald turned to Lucille and held out his hand.

"Am I forgiven, little girl?" he asked with a plaintive smile.

She nodded, because she could not trust herself to speak.

On reaching her room she sat down at a window from which she could see the rocks on the beach where they had been sitting. And then a dull ache in her heart brought tears to her eyes. Blessed tears! It is only when we are young that they mean relief; when we are older, they scald.

While she was dressing for dinner, there came a knock at the door and, without waiting for an answer, Bess Reyling, her hostess, entered.

"That's right, Lucille, look your prettiest; a whole batch of men arrived this afternoon for the club dance and I want you to shine."

Mrs. Reyling looked her friend over critically. "You haven't been crying, have you?"

"No, I had a slight headache," stammered Lucille, flushing hotly.

"By the way, where were you all the afternoon? Jack wanted to drive you over to the golf links."

"I went down to the beach with Mr. Townsend."

Mrs. Reyling frowned slightly, but she was too wise a woman to make open protest.

She was twenty-five, and had been married two years to a man she adored. As he spoiled her unmercifully, she was apt to tyrannize over all those who came under her sway. Lucille was one of her dearest friends, and she hoped some day to bring her into the family. Her admission that she had been spending the afternoon with Gerald Townsend was, therefore, not altogether to her fancy.

"Well, come down as soon as you are ready, dear," she said finally, and then she crossed the room and put her arm lovingly around Lucille's waist.

"Are you enjoying yourself?" she asked.

"Yes, so much, Bess dear," answered the girl; and then she stooped and kissed her.

When Mrs. Reyling left the room Lucille was tortured by remorse. Was she doing right? She knew that Bess expected her to accept Jack. Should she not tell her the truth, that with body and soul she loved the other?

She descended the stairs slowly and started nervously, as a young man stepped forward, holding out to her a great bunch of roses.

It was Jack Reyling.

CHAPTER II.

Forty years ago the village of Avondale, in the upper part of New York State, boasted one broad avenue, lined with trees and called Main Street; a few straggling lanes, which began well and ended abruptly; and that was all. The doctor, the Methodist minister, and the postmaster were then

the only powers in Avondale's social world. But time works its changes relentlessly, and now Avondale is a bustling, busy town, with factories, office buildings and trolley cars, The three old men who had once been rulers of the little community found themselves with the march of years relegated to the background, and when they met weekly, as was their wont, for their innocent little game of cards, they were apt to deplore the new régime, and to solemnly declare that the country was going to the dogs.

The minister was a widower, and lived in a tiny cottage on one of the new paved streets—a street that had formerly been a path through his orchard. The postmaster was a bachelor who clung to his old dwelling in the very heart of the new town; while the physician's house stood at the end of the Main Street, as far away as he could conveniently place it from the new order of things that he hated.

Dr. Gaines was a little over sixty. He was tall and straight, with a massive head crowned with snow-white locks that he was apt to toss into wild disorder in moments of excitement. Early in life he had married a neighboring physician's daughter who had never ceased to love and revere him. Of the five children that had been born to them, only one grew to manhood; and he, the eldest, a handsome, clever, open-hearted youth who had readily chosen to follow in his father's footsteps, died suddenly before he had completed his second year at college.

When the grief-stricken parents arrived in Cambridge to receive the body of their dead son, it was to learn for the first time that he had left a widow—a pretty, frail girl, a Boston shopkeeper's daughter whom he had married secretly some months before.

The old people listened incredulously to the girl's story, but after examining their son's papers they admitted her claim, and when, a few months later, she died in child-birth, they brought their little granddaughter home.

Lucille was reared in an atmosphere of love. Her grandparents and their few friends regarded her as a marvel of precocity, but unfortunately she had no companions of her own age and she naturally grew to be shy and self-conscious. Her dolls and her dogs were in her infancy her chief companions, and when she grew older she was given the care of the chickens and pigeons. Her grandfather's friend, the minister, gave her lessons, and there was no thought of allowing her to attend the new school in the big brick building that she had learned to associate in her somewhat weird fancy with bogies and witches. Occasionally a friendly neighbor would invite her to a children's party, but these invitations were usually declined, as Dr. Gaines objected to her association with the town children, carrying as he did his bitterness even to the third generation of those who had provided the new order of things in Avondale.

Mrs. Gaines, however, saw, as the girl grew older, that she was often wistful and distraite, and so frequently, on her own responsibility, she encouraged acquaintanceship with the little girls of the neighborhood.

When Lucille was twelve her grandparents decided to send her away to a boarding-school. At this she wept bitterly but, being trained to obedience, she made no protest. Her five years there were, on the whole, happy ones. She was a favorite both with pupils and teachers, and, in the sunshine of universal approbation, her nature blossomed.

She was a good scholar, if not a brilliant one. She was diligent and methodical, with Puritanical notions of right and wrong; helpful, sympathetic and wonderfully womanly. It was not surprising, therefore, that she should be loved. At the boarding-school she formed a romantic attachment for Bess Hildreth, one of the older girls, and this devotion ripened into a lasting friendship.

They visited one another during the summers that followed their graduation and, when Bess was married, Lucille was her only attendant. It was at the house party which preceded the wedding that she met Gerald Townsend. The meeting came about in this way: One evening Townsend noticed a pretty shy girl gowned simply in white, and was sufficiently attracted to stop to speak to her; but he had had so little experience with young girls that he scarcely knew how to address her.

"Weddings are dreadful bores," he ventured by way of an opening, and to his amusement she blushed as she answered:

"I think they're lovely."

"Really! you enjoy them?"

"This is the first I've attended, and I am enjoying it so much."

The naïveté of her reply awakened his interest. He was surprised to find a girl who was so frank in expressing her enjoyment, and fancied a new species of girlhood had crossed his path. There was a long silence, and then, before he had broached another topic, Jack Reyling came up and claimed her for a dance. Bess was marrying a man she had known all her life, and Jack, his younger brother and Lucille were already great friends.

This one brief conversation was all that passed between Lucille and Gerald Townsend. The girl,

who was a stranger in the fashionable world around her, had plenty of leisure to study her companions, and from the first Townsend had impressed her deeply.

He was just the sort of man to fascinate a girl who lived in a world of romance all her own. She remembered the few words he had spoken to her, and she used them as the foundation for many a day-dream. When gradually his image grew hazy, she filled in the outlines that were left to her, until it became the picture of a god—immortal in love and beauty.

The wedding being over she returned to Avondale and resumed her quiet life, still holding aloof from the townspeople with whom she had little in common. But, as she drew back, they made more decided advances for her friendship.

Dr. Gaines, with the selfishness of age, wished to keep the girl ever beside him. She walked with him, drove with him, played chess with him in the evenings and, when the three old men met for their weekly game of cards, she frequently took a hand.

Two years slipped by in this fashion, and then, as spring advanced, Lucille's health became a cause for her grandparents' concern.

Mrs. Gaines was the first to speak of it.

"Lucille looks poorly. She's grown so thin, her clothes just hang on her," she said.

"What ails her, mother?"

"I don't know. She's run down. She hasn't any appetite and she feels so tired mornings."

"It's malaria," said the doctor conclusively.

No, it ain't, John. She needs a change. It's all very well for two old folks like us to live here year after year, but it's different for her."

"You were married and settled, at her age,

Agatha," commented the old man, looking admiringly at his wife.

Mrs. Gaines was knitting one of those endless shawls that busy women always have on hand to occupy their restless fingers.

"Who's Lucille to marry, I'd like to know. All the likely young men go to the city to work; those who stay here she won't look at. I was wishing she'd take a fancy to Jerry Dean. He was wild about her when he was home at Christmas, but she wouldn't, and now I hear he's engaged to the eldest Smith girl."

"That ain't worrying Lucille, is it?" demanded John Gaines sharply.

"Mercy, no; but I think she wants a change," answered his wife soothingly. "John, she got a letter from Mrs. Reyling."

"Yes."

"She didn't say anything about it till I asked her, and then she said Mrs. Reyling wanted her to come and visit them."

"Did she now? Well, does Lucille want to go?"

"She says no, John, but I think we ought to insist. It'll do her good to get away from the old folks for a while. We mustn't be selfish, John; we can't have her always with us; we must let her have her chance like other girls."

Mrs. Gaines got up and stood beside her husband's chair as she spoke and, when she finished, she stooped and kissed him on the forehead. So it was settled; and, in spite of Lucille's protest that she was perfectly well and preferred remaining at home, the second week in July found her on her way to Asquith.

CHAPTER III.

Asquith was one of those summer colonies, founded by a coterie of men who were devoted to out-of-door sports. It consisted of two dozen cottages and a club-house or casino. The ocean on one side and a large cultivated park on the other, provided a variety of entertainment. Half a dozen yachts lay at anchor in the horse-shoe-shaped harbor. The fishing was excellent, the bathing perfect, while landward, the golf links, never deserted even in the stormiest weather, offered a constant allurement. The casino had its music rooms, a pavilion for dancing, a library, smoking rooms, lounging rooms and a kitchen—the last presided over by a chef whose cuisine proved him to be an artist.

Among the founders of Asquith was Albert Reyling, Bess's husband. One of the laziest men in the world, he was likewise one of the best-natured. He was tall and stout, with near-sighted blue eyes. His brown hair was slightly touched with gray. He boasted a short straight nose, a very good mouth, and a chin with a dimple in it. He belonged to a good family, loathed work of any kind, and was happiest when seated in a comfortable chair, smoking the biggest and blackest of cigars.

His wife, who ruled him completely, and yet worshipped him, was a little nervous creature, with hazel eyes and a quantity of auburn hair. She dressed exquisitely and was deservedly one of the most popular women at Asquith.

Lucille had been with the Reylings nearly a

month, and still Bess would not listen to a suggestion bearing on her departure. "We shall be alone for a few days, Lucille," Mrs. Reyling had said to her on her arrival, "but at the end of the week the house will be full. Jack is coming up; Mr. and Mrs. Allaire will be here, and so will Mr. Townsend."

"Gerald Townsend?" Lucille asked, eagerly.

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"I met him when you were married, Bess; a tall distinguished-looking man, with perfect manners?"

"Yes. I'm afraid his manners are better than his morals. Don't lose your heart to him, dearie, I've destined you for something better."

This something better was the long secretly cherished plan to make Lucille her sister-in-law, by wedding her to Jack.

Lucille did not reply. She was wondering if he would remember her, and if she would now appear to him only a country girl, lacking the polish of the women of his world. Her pretty clothes, which she had prepared so carefully for this visit, and which Bess had critically examined and approved of, now seemed home-made and dowdy; and she sighed, feeling discontented for the first time in her life. Long after she retired, she lay thinking, her busy brain conjuring up possible pictures of their meeting.

The Allaires arrived about noon. The men were to come on the later train which was behind time, as usual. Finally Bess suggested that the women should retire and leave Bert and Tom Allaire to welcome the belated travellers.

Lucille heard them come in. She could distinguish their voices; Bert's hearty laugh as he greeted them; Jack's deep bass, and finally the rich, rather drawling tones of Gerald Townsend.

Very sweet and girlish she looked the next morn

ing as she came into the breakfast-room clad in her white piqué skirt, white shirt-waist and blue silk stock. Jack greeted her warmly—he was quite ready to fall in with his sister-in-law's plans—and Gerald Townsend came up to her smiling.

"Certainly I remember Miss Gaines," he said, in answer to Bess's question. "One could not easily forget her."

Lucille flushed. Seated at the table, she did not enter into the general conversation, but sat listening with unwonted brilliancy in her eyes, and a half smile upon her lips.

A sprained ankle caused Townsend's visit of ten days to be stretched into several weeks, but now that he was able to walk he still showed no intention of leaving.

With a house full of guests Mrs. Reyling had little time to devote to any one specially, and so it happened that for a while she scarcely noticed that Lucille and Gerald were almost constantly together. She knew Gerald well, and she had felt satisfied that Lucille was not the girl to attract him. Moreover, she meant Lucille for Jack, and she had not the faintest whim to look for a romance in another direction. Asquith was unusually gay, and that meant a great deal. People came and went; there were dinner-parties, dances and suppers at the Casino; there was bathing and there was boating—in fact a varied occupation for each hour of the day; in view of which it was little wonder that Bess was not all-seeing.

The life at Asquith was thoroughly unconventional. Society seemed to throw off all restraint and to go in for an unqualified good time. They were all friends—these cottage-dwellers—and first names were the rule and not the exception.

Into this rather rapid atmosphere Lucille came wonderingly. This was a phase of life she had never dreamed of. There was nothing serious about it; no one seemed to have a purpose; one day was so like another; what one did to-day was repeated with equal zest on the morrow.

To this girl with her exquisite day dreams it was a rude awakening, and she held herself slightly aloof, devoting herself more and more to Gerald, who for two weeks was confined to a lounge in the library, or a swinging chair on the piazza, thinking that in him she found the one being of them all fit to live in her ideal world.

As for him he was amused by her old-fashioned ideas of men and morals. He had cared little for young girls, preferring their older sisters; in some cases their mothers; and this white page from a maiden's life was a revelation.

He wondered what would become of her. Would she develop into a woman of the world like Bess or Nelly Allaire, or would she go back to Avondale and be lost in a life of self-sacrifice?

He divined the hero worship with which he was surrounded, and he smiled bitterly to himself, as he realized how unworthy he was of it. Yet he could not bring himself to tear the veil from her eyes. She would find out some day for herself how little of a hero he was. It was not for him to hasten the process of her enlightenment. So they spent long hours together talking; he assuming a fatherly air, half patronizing, half quizzical, mocking at himself more than at her, teaching her lessons of the world, or weaving fantastic tales that filled her soul with wonderment.

At times he teased her about Jack, for he had soon discerned Mrs. Reyling's plans, and he praised the

youth, while the girl beside him battled with anger and dismay. Then he would change the topic suddenly and drift into one of his most delightful moods.

One day Bert Reyling came upon them in the library. Gerald was discoursing brilliantly and Lucille was listening, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes; but upon Bert's entrance, the flow of eloquence ceased and Lucille soon left the men together.

"Have a cigar?" asked Bert, who was puffing away vigorously as usual.

"Thanks, I'll take a cigarette if you have one," answered Gerald. Then there was a period of silence. Bert was not much of a talker, but he was not lacking in shrewdness, and he wondered what would have happened had Bess, instead of he, stumbled upon the couple, for he too knew of his wife's pet project.

"See here, old man," he began, finally, "no poaching, you know! Those are Jack's preserves."

Gerald raised his head and was about to retort angrily, when he thought better of it. He made it a rule never to drag a woman's name into a quarrel.

"Miss Gaines is one of the most charming girls I have ever met, and Jack will be a lucky fellow if he wins her," he said.

"Well, he hasn't won her yet, and Bess will take your head off, if you spoil Jack's game," Bert announced cheerfully.

"I am not likely to spoil any man's game. See here, Bert, you know me well enough for that. Miss Gaines has a tender heart; she is a born nurse, and she has been very kind to me since I hurt this unfortunate ankle of mine. It has never been very

strong since I sprained it so badly the year we went bear-hunting together."

"Lord! What a trip that was! I never worked so hard to enjoy myself, before or since. I lost twenty pounds that summer you hurt your ankle and poor Beyton nearly lost his life. We were three of the most disreputable-looking men that ever reached Denver," and Bert laughed at the recollection. Gerald smiled, and started another reminiscence of their travels together, pleased to have turned the conversation from a possibly dangerous channel. Meanwhile Lucille, in her room, was thinking it all over. He must care for her a little, otherwise he would not exert himself so much to interest her, she argued.

In dressing for dinner, she took unusual pains with her toilette, and entered the drawing-room earlier than was her wont, half hoping to find him there also. But she was disappointed. Instead of finding Gerald, she found Jack, and the substitution was not agreeable to her.

All that evening Gerald avoided her and devoted himself to Nelly Allaire, who was the prettiest and most audacious of all Bess's friends. Her conversation, which was freely sprinkled with the latest slang, rather grated upon Townsend, and yet to-night he seemed to the others to be thoroughly fascinated by Nelly's brilliant small talk. She had indeed a very clever wit and, with a saucy nose, a beautiful mouth and a pleasing voice, although she talked incessantly, she was far from unattractive.

Lucille, who was sitting on the steps with Jack and trying to appear interested, although she was miserable, caught snatches of their conversation.

"I say, Gerald, you've been here three weeks now. Belle Hastings will be sending in a hurry

call, if you don't show up soon," she heard Nelly say.

Belle Hastings! Who was Belle Hastings, and what claim had she upon Gerald Townsend? She listened breathlessly for his answer, but Gerald only laughed, and her poor heart stifled the little bud of happiness that had just sprung into being.

CHAPTER IV.

The next day was Sunday. It was scarcely distinguishable from the other days in the week, except perhaps that breakfast was later, and there were apt to be more men about.

Gerald Townsend made his appearance after Bess and her guests drove off to the golf links. It was a perfect day, and he went out on the piazza and gazed at the peaceful scene before him: the blue sky, across which little clouds, like fluffy balls of cotton, scurried; the ocean rolling up with rhythmic beat upon the smooth white beach, and cresting against the great files of rocks which clustered along the shore and formed sheltered nooks for many a pair of lovers.

"If I did the right thing I would go away," he mused. "I have no business to fall in love with a mere girl. The path of duty and the path of inclination diverge here, as usual. It is strange I never fail to recognize that there are two paths, and yet always choose that of inclination."

Then he went slowly down the steps. Out on the small lawn that Bess was so proud of, he had caught sight of a glimmer of white.

Lucille was lounging in a hammock. She too had

come down after the others had gone, and she had fancied that she would have to spend the morning alone. Looking up suddenly she saw Gerald approaching; whereupon she hastily bent her eyes to the page of a *Herald's* Colored Supplement.

"Good-morning, Miss Gaines! What interesting bit of news have you found that absorbs your attention?" he demanded, as he reached her side.

"It is not interesting and it isn't new," she said. "I thought you had gone to the golf links with the others."

He carefully spread a double sheet of the paper on the grass and sank down upon it.

"Why are you not at church?" he asked. Much to Bess's astonishment Lucille had insisted upon attending the village church, two miles back of Asquith.

"I had a headache, and besides I overslept myself," she answered.

He shook his head slowly. "I am afraid you are getting into bad habits; we are corrupting you. Well, never mind! Shall I preach you a sermon?"

"Do."

"Very well; now listen attentively. And it came to pass, in the early part of the nineteenth century, that a man, being nigh unto death, reviewed his life. 'I have done much wickedness,' quoth he. 'I have not spared my hand, and now that I am about to die, I have nothing to urge in extenuation of my sins. Where desire was, did I satisfy it; where pleasure was, did I pursue it; my days have been without profit, and my nights without repentance. Verily there was little use in my life but, if it had a purpose, I have neglected it.' And the sick man saw each page of the book of life unfold, and each was covered with a fine handwriting, until one ap-

peared that was white and clean. 'What is that?' cried the man, and a voice answered. 'The one good deed that thou hast done; the one time thy hand was stayed; the one opportunity thou hast lost,' and upon hearing this, the sick man bowed his head and died. Now, my child," he continued in another tone, "what is the moral you infer from this? Do you think he died regretting the one white page in his life?"

Lucille was puzzled. She did not know whether to be shocked at his want of reverence, or to be amused at the cleverness of the story.

"Every man has more than one white page in his life," she protested.

"You are wrong, but your faith is sublime. Go on trusting in human nature; it is a beautiful folly."

"Why a beautiful folly?"

"Because folly alone is beautiful. Youth is folly; all that delights the eye, flowers and birds and pictures are folly. They are not wisdom, for wisdom is old, and its brow is furrowed with thought; it moves slowly, and it deliberates before acting. Be foolish while you are young, that you may be wise when you are old."

"Mr. Townsend, did you ever write a book?"

"Yes, among other things, I tried literature. I was to be the American Shakespeare, the genius the wise men have been expecting. I assure you I had my full share of vanity, when I was young. O how long ago that was! you have no idea how long ago, Lucille. I did not have a careless boyhood. My tutors crammed my head with useless knowledge. I was never taught the beauty of the present. I was imbued with the value of the future. Then one day I was a man, and I realized what I had lost, what had been denied me. I saw other boys of my age

happy, thoughtless young animals, while I realized that I had the cares of the universe upon my shoulders. I was old before I had a chance to be young. There, do not look distressed; I must not call forth more pity than I deserve. I have lived my life. When I found how little was left me, I made the most of it." He paused, and smiled gaily at her. He had vowed to himself to keep off of dangerous topics.

"And your book?"

"O that belonged to the second period. I went in for enjoyment, but I took up literature, just to have another fetish to sacrifice to. It was a wonderful book; I would like to show it to you, but fortunately there are no copies in existence."

"Why?"

"Well, to tell the truth it is rather a humiliating story. I published, myself, a special author's edition, and, when it came home, I showed it to a friend, whose opinion I valued very highly and—well, she laughed at it. I was nearer to tears than to laughter then, myself, I can assure you. It was the first great disappointment of my life. Now I see how sensible she was."

"It was a woman to whom you showed it?" asked Lucille slowly.

"Yes, of course. It always is a woman when a man is twenty-five."

"How could she laugh? It was cruel of her."

'It was the best thing she could have done. It cured me. I have not written a line since that time."

They lapsed into silence. He was looking back into that past which held so many memories, and she was thinking of the woman who had been so much to him in his youth. Was she dead? Lucille

longed to ask, dreading the thought that she was still alive and able to influence him. That must be Belle Hastings of whom Nelly Allaire spoke so carelessly.

Lucille did not make allowances for a man's latitude in affairs of the heart. One might like many people, but one loved but once. She loved. She knew it now, and her love was hopeless. Well, other women bore such sorrows in their lives and it made them saintly. Please God, this cross would uplift and purify her also.

That afternoon she went driving with Jack, and, as he was leaving Asquith the next morning, he ventured to speak to her of what he had in his heart. He was a manly young fellow, very much in love, and half ashamed of it. It is strange that a man will be ashamed of an honest affection, and yet glory in an illicit passion.

Lucille interrupted him quickly.

"Don't speak, Jack," she said, "we have been such good friends. I like you so much. Please spare yourself and me." There was nervousness in her voice and her tone was pleading.

"Very well, I'll wait. I don't want to hurry you, Lucille, but I do love you and I don't despair of winning you in time," he said earnestly. And so it ended.

He put his disappointment bravely away, and did his best to amuse her on their long drive.

"There will be quite a change in the house next week," he told her; "the Allaires leave to-morrow, and Townsend was just telling Bert he had to go too. So you see there will be all new faces here by Tuesday."

"Where is Mr Townsend going?" asked Lucille, trying to steady her voice.

"Bar Harbor, I think. He usually spends August there with the Hastings and Dinsmores. He's an old beau of Belle Hastings, you know."

Yes that was the woman Nelly had spoken of.

"Who is Belle Hastings?"

"Mrs. Hastings? O, a widow, immensely wealthy, with a house at Bar Harbor, a yacht, a shooting box in the Adirondacks. She's an awfully nice woman to visit, too. Townsend has known her since they were children, but she married old Hastings for his money. He's been dead now about ten years. Every one expected she would marry Townsend then, but she hasn't, although they are the best of friends."

He gave the explanation easily, not knowing how each word stung the girl at his side. As a matter of fact Jack was far less observing even than Bert, and he never so much as dreamed that Lucille could be interested in Gerald. She sat fighting back the tears with a feeling of utter hopelessness, now that Jack's words had made everything plain to her.

And then she realized that she was turning one of Gerald's "corners."

CHAPTER V.

"I AM going away, to-morrow, Lucille." Gerald made the announcement abruptly.

They were sitting on one of the balconies of the Casino, listening to a so-called sacred concert. He had been trying for the last half-hour to introduce the subject of his departure casually, but failing, had come out with it bluntly. There was a moment's silence, and then she said bravely:

"Friends of the summer have to part some time."

"Summer friends! Surely we are more than that. I feel as if I had known you all your life—your little white life all redolent of violets and May blossoms. Do you know how wonderful it is to be young, to have the future before you, to look forward, not backward? That is the difference between us. We value most what we have lost. Your youth is to me your greatest charm." He spoke sadly, and Lucille wondered if he was trying to spare himself or her.

"I am not so very young," she protested.

"You are twenty, and life gallops between twenty-five and forty. For you the race begins; for me it is almost finished. You belong to the future; I to the past; and we cannot bridge hands across the chasm."

He looked at her curiously. He was surprised that she showed so little emotion. He did not know that Jack had told her of his going.

"To-morrow I shall be far away, but I shall be thinking of you, and wishing myself back at Asquith," he began again, softly, with a fierce longing to stir her out of her calm. As he spoke he felt ashamed of himself, and he added quickly: "You see I am really confoundedly lazy—almost as lazy as Bert Reyling—and I hate responsibility of any kind. I have neglected things dreadfully since I have been here, and I have a shoal of letters to answer, broken engagements, invitations I have ignored, people I have disappointed—all on account of a sprained ankle."

"Are invitations all you have to think of, Mr. Townsend?" she asked. She resented his levity on this last evening they would spend together.

"And club dues. I assure you, they are quite a consideration."

"Have you no business?"

"No," he answered abruptly, and then added: "My father's estate unfortunately gives me an income that amply satisfies my modest wishes."

"You are all so different from the people I am accustomed to. We live in a work-a-day world," she said sadly.

"I should like to see your world."

"Would you?"

"Yes. Will you ask me to come?"

He looked into her eyes and, seeing their tenderness, he read the story she was trying to hide from her own self. Had he only felt worthy of her, what happiness lay there ready for the taking! He had only to stretch out his hand and grasp it; but he hesitated. Link her life to his? her youth to his prosaic middle age? her faith to his unbelief? And then, when he had won her, would he not tire of her? He who had tired of so many. A flood of bitterness swept over his soul, stifling the better nature that had stirred at the tenderness in her eyes.

"Will you let me come?" he repeated, and then he took her hand in his. He felt the fingers stiffen, and then, with a flutter, resign themselves to his warm clasp. Slowly he drew her hand towards him and then bent his head and pressed his lips upon it.

What might have happened belongs to the chronicle of the unknown, for in that moment he knew that she resigned herself to his will, gave her being into his keeping, and he determined to accept the trust. He was stirred to the depths of his selfish soul, and the seed of a deeper, holier love than he had ever known took root in his heart.

"Lucille," he murmured softly, and her eyes, full

of blind adoration, again met his. A moment of ecstasy, and then Bess's shrill laugh jarred upon their startled ears.

"What are you doing out here in the dark, Lucille?" she demanded. "Come inside; it's too damp out there. Men are such selfish creatures that they don't care whether they sacrifice a woman's life or not; but I don't propose to have you take your death of cold, so come right in," and she carried Lucille off with her.

That night, when they had all gone to their rooms, Bess knocked at Lucille's door.

"It's either your ignorance, or a wholesale disregard of people's opinion that lets you carry on so," she said, seating herself comfortably on the edge of the bed.

She looked like a child in her white négligé, and her beautiful hair falling in two long braids down to her knees, but her eyes were full of determination. She had come to have it out with Lucille, and she was not apt to mince matters.

Lucille was brushing her own wavy locks, and her face was hidden from her accuser.

"I didn't know I was carrying on, Bess," she answered indignantly.

"I warned you against Gerald Townsend when he first came. I grant you he is fascinating, but his reputation! O dear! Why, he's as good as engaged to Belle Hastings now, yet he is flirting with you and, when your back is turned, he makes love to Nelly Allaire. Don't contradict me, he does. I myself saw him kiss her good-night. Of course he was saying good-bye to her, but the kissing wasn't necessary, was it?"

"Bess!" The exclamation was so fraught with pain that Mrs. Reyling sprang to her feet.

"You are not in love with him, you silly girl, are you?" she cried, seizing Lucille by the arm.

"Of course not, and if he did kiss Mrs. Allaire, I am sure she didn't object. You are all very free and easy here."

"Don't discuss our ways, Lou; you don't understand us. Besides, we are all married and can do as we please. It is the unmarried girls who have to be careful. As for Nelly, she doesn't mean anything."

"That is just it. None of you mean anything by what you say and do. You have no sincerity. O Bess, I am sick of it all," and Lucille threw her arms about her friend's neck, and gave way to a paroxysm of weeping.

"Don't cry, for heaven's sake, Lou. Bear up, that's a good girl. I am not blaming you. I only want you to be careful, for your own sake," and she kissed her tenderly and soothed her, as though she were a child.

The next morning before Gerald left he sought to make an explanation to Lucille, but the girl met his advances with a new dignity.

"Mr. Townsend, we have met here under unusual circumstances," she said, "the freedom of the place, the unconventionality, have allowed us to drift into sudden intimacy. Perhaps when you go away you will realize this. If not, you know where I live, and it is not a great way to Avondale. If you come I shall be glad to see you; if not, I shall understand; but you must see me in my own home first, before I can listen to you."

He marvelled at the womanliness of her words, and he realized again how unworthy he was of her.

"And if I come to seek you in your own home, you will give me your answer then?" he pleaded.

"Yes." And with that they parted: he to pick up the threads he had dropped when she came into his life, and she to begin that period of watching and waiting that falls to every woman's share.

CHAPTER VI.

LUCILLE was at home again.

Her grandparents, who had missed her sorely, noted a marked change in her for the better, and were delighted. When on the first evening the old friends met for their game of cards, the bachelor and the widower endeavored to outdo each other in the extravagance of their compliments at which Lucille laughed merrily, protesting that none of the young men she had met had been nearly so gallant as her two old admirers. Of Gerald she said nothing, preferring to let him speak for himself, when he should come.

"Are you glad to be home, dearie?" asked Mrs. Gaines, as she helped Lucille unpack her pretty summer clothes.

"Yes, indeed, mother. The life they lead is so artificial. Bess, of course, is the dearest girl in the world, but the others are as unnatural as can be."

"Father missed you terribly, Lucille."

"And you, mother?"

"Of course I did, too, but then I know you can't keep the young bird in the nest forever. Some day she will want to start a nest of her own. You didn't meet any one you liked at Asquith, did you, dearie?"

Lucille stooped and picked up an armful of ribbons before she answered.

"Please don't ask me, mother, I don't know," she said.

"What did you tell him?" Mrs. Gaines understood, without another word.

"I told him to come here," Lucille whispered, crimsoning as she spoke. The older woman nodded her head approvingly and said no more about it. She was willing to wait. Lucille would tell her all in time, and she appreciated the girl's pride that had insisted upon a lover's wooing her from her own home.

The crisp, cool September weather inspired in Lucille a new activity. She moved swiftly about the little house, putting new touches here and there, and wondering how each would strike Gerald.

The house, which stood about a hundred feet back from the street, was a modest, two-story, frame cottage, with a porch in front and a piazza at the sides and back. The front door opened into a broad hall, with the parlor on one side and the library and dining-room on the other. Upstairs were the bedrooms, while an extra half-story at the back contained the large garret, which is indispensable to the old-fashioned housekeeper.

The parlor, which was only opened on state occasions, was a cold, cheerless room, adorned with heavy, old-fashioned furniture, and the inevitable wax-flowers; but the library and dining-room, where Lucille's influence was dominant, were bright and modern. On the day following her return she went through the rooms critically.

"Nelly Allaire would call it 'the ark,'" she mused, "but he will understand; and if he doesn't it is better he should learn the truth now than later."

The bow-window in the library, which was also the living room, had been turned by Lucille into a

little conservatory, so that all through the long, bleak winter she was cheered by the sight of flowers of her own growing. He had spoken so much of violets, but she knew he referred to the costly hot-house varieties and not to the modest little wild flower, which perhaps he would not even recognize as belonging to the same family. Geraniums were her specialty. They were so hardy, and their brilliant clusters of bloom and spicy, odorous leaves made a fine showing in the numerous vases that decorated the rooms. She wondered what his home had been like. She had never stopped in a city house of luxurious appointments, but she could imagine such a residence much better now than before she had been to Asquith. She began to lay stress upon family, good birth, and good breeding. She wondered what Gerald would say to the granddaughter of a shopkeeper. Mr. and Mrs. Gaines never spoke to her of her mother, but now she felt as if she must know the true circumstances of her birth.

About a week after her return, she was sitting alone with Mrs. Gaines. The doctor had gone for a walk, and Lucille knew that he would not return for at least an hour. She sewed rapidly for a little while, and then the cloth she was hemming dropped from her fingers. She rose and, taking up a low stool, placed it beside her grandmother's chair. The old lady went on knitting industriously. She felt what was coming, but she made no attempt to hasten the explanation.

"Mother," began Lucille, "you have always been mother to me, but I should like to know something about her—my real mother. You have told me about my father, my handsome, clever father who was so young when he died. What can you tell me

of her?" The girl's voice was full of passionate entreaty, and Mrs. Gaines's eyes grew dim, as she realized that the time she had been dreading had arrived.

"Your mother, Lucille? We knew so little about her," she answered, slowly. Lucille grew white to the lips.

"She was. O mother—she was a good woman?" she gasped faintly.

"Yes, yes, my dear!" answered Mrs. Gaines quickly, shocked by the girl's tone. "How could you think otherwise? She was a poor girl, but Jack loved her very dearly."

"Tell me something about her. You met her, didn't you?"

"Yes, my child, we saw her when we went to Cambridge. She told us of her marriage, and it was a great shock to us, as you may imagine, coming on top of the terrible sorrow of his sudden death."

"It was a legal marriage?"

At last the question was out, and Lucille, who had been filled with dim foreboding, waited as if her life depended upon the answer. Mrs. Gaines paused. She understood now what her silence had meant to the girl at her feet, and her heart ached as she realized how, unconsciously, they had made their darling suffer.

"Your father, dear, was a foolish boy, but he was a gentleman, and the only wrong he did to the girl he loved was taking advantage of her youth and persuading her to a secret marriage. She was under age, and had her parents wished to, they could have questioned its validity, but they had no thought of such a thing. They were poor, and had a very large family, and were very glad to get the money that father gave them. Mary was a sweet girl, but her

parents were certainly most ordinary. Your father, Lucille, never did anything dishonorable."

Mrs. Gaines spoke eagerly in defence of her son, even against his own daughter, for she had read condemnation in Lucille's eyes.

"How old was she, mother?"

"Sixteen, and such a pretty girl! I know she died of a broken heart. She took no interest in life after John's death. Lucille, we have a package upstairs, of some letters and a book and some trinkets of hers. Come up with me and I will give them to you. Take them to your own room and examine them. Pray to God not to let you judge your parents harshly; and remember, to those who loved as they did, much is forgiven."

Lucille followed her grandmother obediently, but a multitude of thoughts kept her silent. When she was alone in her own room, with the fateful package in her hands, she sat for a time without daring to open it. Finally she unfastened the outer wrapping and saw a small leather book, presumably a diary, three letters, a gold bracelet, and a man's watch-chain made of a woman's hair. This latter Lucille took up reverently, almost caressingly. The bracelet was a slender gold bangle, and the sight of it brought a mist before the girl's eyes. Her poor dear mother had left this as a legacy to the daughter she had scarcely seen.

Then Lucille opened the first letter and recognized her father's handwriting. There were many books in the library which contained specimens of it, and she knew it well. The letter was very brief.

MY DARLING WIFE:

To think at last that I have the right to call you so! That you are my own, sealed to me by your sacred vows . . . vows . . .

It broke off abruptly, and had evidently been thrown aside. The next letter was longer, but, like the former, it bore no date and was unfinished.

MY DEAREST LITTLE WIFE:

What you said last night has set me thinking. Yes, I have wronged you, but that wrong is easily made right. You are my wife; no one can gainsay that. What you told me has made me realize the position I have placed you in. If I urged you to a secret marriage, it was because I loved you, and I wanted to know that you were all mine. Tell your parents at once, and I will write to mine. Don't worry! you have been such a brave girl. . . .

Lucille grew numb with pain. Her heart ached for her poor dead mother. The last letter was in a different handwriting, and with a throb of pity, she opened it. It was only a note.

MY OWN DEAR JACK:

I can't wait until to-morrow to thank you for your present. It is lovely, and I am the happiest girl in Boston. Sometimes I wonder if it is all true, or if I won't wake up and find I have been dreaming. But there's something here now that makes it real, and I am so happy.

Until to-morrow, with love and kisses,

YOUR OWN LITTLE WIFE.

The paper dropped from Lucille's hands. Tears started to her eyes and fell, thick and fast, upon the book in her lap. Finally she opened that. It was a memorandum. She turned over page after page without finding more than notices of lectures, and trifling engagements, with now and then a Latin quotation or a bit of Greek. The first item of interest was this:

Went into Byrnes's to get Latin treatise. Met Mary.

Mary, that was her mother, and Byrnes's was the book store owned by Mary's father. Then a few pages later:

Met Mary B. after church, and took a walk.

And then again:

Took Mary a locket and chain.

And again:

Bought Mary a bracelet.

The next few pages had been torn out. Perhaps they had contained the record she was seeking.

Met Mary to-day as arranged. Settled about marriage.

And then the last item in the book, written in a trembling hand, evidently after he had been taken ill:

To Mary Gaines, my wife, formerly Mary Byrnes, I leave all of which I die possessed.

The date of the marriage she could guess at, but she searched eagerly and in vain for a certificate. A wave of relief swept over her soul, however. She had so dreaded finding some irregularity, some insuperable barrier which Gerald's love would not be able to surmount; and now there was nothing.

CHAPTER VII.

The sound of gay, chattering voices; a faint scream, drowned in a shrill whistle; a last good-bye, and the launch steamed off, carrying its burden of girls and men to the yacht which was waiting for them in the harbor.

Isabel Hastings and Gerald Townsend were left alone on the dock.

"Well, they are off, and we are going to have a

day of rest at last," said Gerald, smiling, as he waved his cap for a last farewell.

"A day together! Won't that bore you, Gerald? It will seem so quiet in the house without that band of mad-caps," returned Isabel.

"I wonder May does not drive you to distraction."

May was Mrs. Hastings' stepdaughter, a wild, harum-scarum girl of twenty who never failed to furnish some sensation each season.

Mrs. Hastings and Gerald turned, and walked back towards the house.

"How absurd!" she exclaimed. "I am fond of May, and I believe in her heart she is fond of me. It is only her way."

"If she does not drown some one, or set the yacht on fire before she returns, I shall be greatly surprised. Mrs. Fiske is not a very efficient chaperone. She is nearly as mad as May."

"What has poor May been doing to you now? This mood of yours seems tinged with a personal bitterness."

"Nothing, I assure you; only I have a long score of practical jokes to remember, from the day she put nettles in my bed, to the time she inserted a personal in the *Herald* and gave my address."

"I did not hear about that, Gerald!"

"Probably she forgot to mention it; it was this spring, and she represented me as a soul longing for its affinity and taking this means of finding it. Needless to say I was deluged with epistles from every species of the genus woman. I had not the slightest notion to whom I was indebted for this attention until May called upon me one morning, quite informally, and asked me how I liked the experience and would I let her read the letters."

"How could she?"

"I am sure I don't know. I have been legitimate prey for so many years that nothing surprises me nowadays. Only, when she is quiet for a week at a time, I know she is planning some new and startling pleasantry."

"Gerald, you make me nervous. I feel now as if I ought to have gone with them."

"And left me alone? You know nothing would have tempted me to join the party: besides, I have scarcely said a dozen words to you since my arrival, and I anticipate having you to myself for a couple of hours at least."

There was a tone of intimacy that was very welcome to Isabel's ears, and secretly she acknowledged that to herself, also, the thought of a long day together was delightful.

They had had their romance. It was one of the first vague dreams of love that had appeared upon the man's horizon. The world had said that she threw him over to marry old Hastings, but she knew better. He had been her first love, and to-day he was more than all others to her. This was indeed the secret of her long widowhood, but a secret so jealously guarded that he had never guessed it. He was really quite fond of her; she was as dear to him as a sister would have been. He submitted to her rulings in most things, and now he had determined to take her again into his confidence and ask her advice.

She little dreamed of what was coming and, as they sat opposite to each other, at the lunch table, she chattered on gaily for a time, unconscious of his growing abstraction.

"Have you forgotten me, Gerald?" she asked at length, rather abruptly, noting his inattention. "I am sure you are not listening to me."

He started. "I beg your pardon, Belle, but this reminds me of the past, when we were young."

"And foolish," added the woman, sighing softly.

"And happy," he added.

There was another pause.

"Surely you do not regret it, Belle?" he asked tenderly. The influence of the past was upon him.

"No, I have no time for regret. My life is full to repletion."

"And mine is empty unto barrenness."

"Why don't you make something of it? Gerald, you gave promise of such brilliancy."

"It withered under the mockery of a woman's laugh."

"Mme. Stefani was your idol then; but surely a woman's influence should not have turned your genius aside."

"A woman's influence is all-powerful, for good or for evil."

"And hers was for evil?"

"As yours is for good."

"Then prove it."

"Prove what?"

"That I have influence over you. Rouse yourself. You have the making of a famous man in you."

"I am too old."

"What nonsense! You are only a few years older than I am."

"A woman has no age. Until she loses her interest in man, she is young, but a man soured and cynical as I am at thirty-eight is already aged. I realized it fully this summer when I met a girl on the threshold of womanhood. She taught me that I belonged to the past generation."

Isabel grew pale. "Was she a new woman?" she asked lightly.

"No, she is one of those children of Nature whom God keeps young to teach us that the fountain of eternal youth lies in the human heart."

He was surprised himself at the reverence in his voice, and the truth came to him slowly. This was the love that all these years he had been waiting for. He might resolve never to see her again; he might let her pass out of his life; but he could no longer deceive himself concerning the sincerity of this new passion.

Isabel had listened to his eulogy, with fresh despair. How many times had she been his confidante! but this time there was a ring of sincerity in his words that had hitherto been absent, and she felt that her own hopes had received their death-blow. She had waited so patiently for him to return to his old allegiance, and this was her reward. His love had awakened, but not for her. Some other woman would reap the harvest she had tended so carefully.

Mentally she contrasted herself with the girl who had won his love, and protested that it was unfair. She had loved him all her life, and yet he had turned from her to a mere child.

Gerald, wrapped in his own thoughts, failed to notice the change in her face. When she next spoke, she had regained control of herself and was once more the quiet, elegant woman of the world he called his friend.

"Tell me something about her, Gerald?" she begged. "Did you meet her at Asquith?" The tone of voice in which she pronounced the name of the summer resort, which had such a gay reputation, caused Gerald to smile.

"Yes, I met her at Mrs. Reyling's. She is a school friend of Bess's. A dear, simple, little coun-

try girl; the most child-like woman I have ever met," he answered.

"Is she pretty? O, don't answer. Of course she is. That was a silly question of mine. Tell me rather what she is like?"

"Her face is like a flower; she is not too tall; she is slender and graceful; gentle and shy. I can't describe her; you must see her and love her, to know what she really is."

"I suppose I shall see her soon?"

"Ah, that is it. Have I the right to take that child from her delicious day-dreams and bring her into my world of lost illusions?"

"She need never know. Most women, Gerald, are only too glad to be allowed to set an idol up in their hearts."

"But the day of awakening must come."

"Not unless you wish it. It is so easy to be a hero in a loving woman's eyes. Very little self-sacrifice is needed. Sometimes if you only let her sacrifice herself it is enough." She spoke sadly, with a suspicion of tears in her voice, and a vague shadow fell across his heart. She, too, had suffered, this dear woman he called his friend. Only suffering could have made her so exquisitely sympathetic, but still he did not know that the wound had been inflicted by his own hand.

"Belle!" he remonstrated.

"Forgive me, Gerald. Let me still be your friend, and I will do what I can to help you. She, I know, will make you cast off that look of indifference you wear so constantly that people forget it is not part of your very nature."

"Thank you, Isabel."

She leaned across the table, and held out her hand to him. He took it in his, and raised it cour-

teously to his lips. It was these little acts that endeared him to women. In another man they might have savored of affectation. In him they were but the expression of innate chivalry.

CHAPTER VIII.

"SHALL I go, mother?" Lucille asked.

She was standing before the fireplace, with an open letter in her hand. Mrs. Gaines looked up, as she answered,

"I would if I were you; and wear one of your prettiest frocks."

Maggie Smith's tea-party to announce her engagement to Jerry Dean was causing a good deal of comment in Avondale. Lucille, who took such small part in the festivities of the little town, would have preferred to remain at home, but something in her grandmother's face, as she announced her decision, told her that it would be better to sacrifice her inclinations.

"Very well," she said, "I suppose I must not let them think I have grown proud after my visit to Asquith."

Near the middle of September Lucille had received her first letter from Gerald. Surely, she thought, it was the strangest love-letter a girl ever had, and she waited some time before answering it, scarcely knowing what to say. Of himself, he wrote in most deprecating fashion. He exalted all womankind in her, uttering the tenderest love passages, and then in the same paragraph mocked at sentimentality. Could she have looked into his face as she read the letter, she might have understood it,

but, as it was, the written page seemed cold and unsatisfactory.

"He writes because he must," she decided. "Now that he is away from me, among the women of his own world, he realizes that I was only an incident of a passing hour. What am I, to come into his life and hold my place there? I am not beautiful; I am not clever; I have no accomplishments. O, if I could only make myself worthy of him!"

She sighed, and lost herself in a dream of the impossible. Her lack of some exceptional talent worried her. She longed to excel in something that he might be proud of her, little knowing that a man, and above all, such a man as Gerald Townsend, cares far more for the beautiful temple of the mind than for the mind itself.

Finally she wrote him, and every word she penned came from her heart. She begged him not to come to Avondale yet, but to wait until they could be sure of themselves. Their acquaintance had been so short she was afraid they scarcely knew each other, and it was best in matters of the heart to proceed slowly. She asked him to forgive her if she seemed timid, and declared that it was as much for his sake, as hers, that she begged for delay.

Gerald tried to read between the lines, and came to the conclusion that, the glamour of their intercourse being removed, she saw him as he was, and regretted her haste. Had he disobeyed her wishes and gone to her, the glad light in her eyes would have undeceived him, but he, who until this time had been bold and self-satisfied, now went to the opposite extreme and found himself wofully lacking in confidence.

He wrote again a long, exquisitely phrased letter, breathing farewell. He hoped she would protest,

say he had misunderstood her, but her pride, which he had overlooked, prevented her from so doing. If he could interpret her letter to mean that all was over between them, then the wish must have fathered the thought; and she would accept his verdict in silence.

Bravely she dug a grave to bury her love, and secretly she watered it with her tears, but to the world she gave no sign. She was graver than of old, and there was a sad little droop at the corners of her mouth, but she said nothing.

Of the two old people who loved her so dearly, one only was deceived. Gradually Mrs. Gaines came to believe that Lucille's romance was over, and, such being the case, she argued that it would be better for her to take a fresh interest in the social life of the town. So it happened that when the invitation to the tea-party arrived, Mrs. Gaines made up her mind that Lucille should accept it.

Gowned in one of her prettiest organdies, a pale blue, sprigged with tiny pink rosebuds and trimmed with ruffles of lace and knots of ribbon, she came into the sitting-room where her grandparents sat and awaited their inspection. Dr. Gaines nodded approvingly, while his wife bustled round smoothing out a crease or settling a ribbon bow.

"You look very sweet, Lucille," she said finally, contemplating the girl with critical eyes.

After she had gone Mrs. Gaines stood by the door thinking. With her womanly intuition she knew Lucille had been passing through a crisis of some kind. She longed to help the child, but they were both self-contained women and she respected Lucille's secret, hoping that the girl would come to her of her own accord. Since the day she had given Lucille the package of relics belonging to her

parents nothing further had passed between them on the subject. She hoped Lucille was not letting that secret mar her life. She divined the love-light in the girl's eyes when Gerald's first letter had arrived, and now she saw with dismay that that light was quenched.

"God keep her and guard her every day of her life," she prayed.

"Agatha! Agatha! what are you doing?" cried her husband.

"I am coming, John; I'm coming." She passed her hand hastily across her eyes and then, humming a quaint old song, she went back to the man who had been her first and only love.

CHAPTER IX.

Lucille rivalled the betrothed couple in the curiosity she aroused. As she entered the large parlor, furnished according to the most advanced ideas of Avondale's aristocracy, there was a lull in the conversation, and all eyes were turned upon her.

Her history, which had in years gone by naturally been a subject of gossip in town, was now almost forgotten, and the young woman of social ambition decided that Lucille was worthy of cultivation. Now that she had just returned from visiting Asquith, they were most anxious to learn from her the newest fads of the fashionable world, with which they fancied she must be conversant. She was naturally disconcerted by the lull that followed her entrance and, after congratulating the affianced couple, she made haste to escape from the centre

group and sought an embrasured window seat where Agatha Dean, Jerry's sister, sat alone.

Agatha was a cripple whose quaint conceits were a source of endless delight to Lucille.

"So you've come back," she said, as Lucille approached. "You didn't decide to remain with your swell friends for good?"

"No, Agatha. You see I am a country mouse, and these ways suit me best," she answered.

"No, they don't, Lucille. You can't fool me. I don't see with ordinary eyes. Shall I tell you what I see deep down in your heart?"

Her little dark face was aglow with eagerness. She loved to display her strange powers of divination; but Lucille grew suddenly pale and turned to her in entreaty.

"Let's talk of something else, Agatha, please. How happy Maggie looks to-day!"

"She ought to be. A little, freckle-faced mug like her, to catch Jerry!" retorted Agatha indignantly. "You ought to have had him, Lucille," she added generously; but Lucille shook her head.

Half an hour later the boys arrived and were greeted noisily. When they were all seated around the long table, partaking of the cold supper bountifully spread before them, the merriment was at its height. Lucille sat between Jerry and Alec Peterson and was the recipient of no end of attention. She managed to shake off the memory of Agatha's unfortunate words and tried to be merry with the rest, but Gerald's face intruded. It came between her and the jolly company, and her heart ached with longing.

"You're not eating, Miss Gaines," said Alec; "let me give you a piece of ham, or do you prefer chicken?"

"Nothing more, thank you," she answered, astonished to find her plate empty. She did not remember eating anything.

With the ice cream came the cake and mottoes. Then Jerry made a speech:

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "in the cake before you is a ring. The fortunate one who gets it will be engaged before the end of a year. This sign has never been known to fail. Now for it."

He cut the cake with a flourish, passing it first to Lucille, who, after helping herself, in turn passed it on. When, a minute later, Lucille discovered that she had the ring, a shout of approval greeted the announcement.

"Perhaps she's engaged now to a city fellow! Are you? Out with it, Lucille!" cried Jerry, boisterously; but Lucille, crimson with embarrassment, vehemently denied the accusation.

Later on they played games, old-fashioned romps, and Lucille again sought out Agatha and sat down with her. The cripple gazed at her curiously for a moment. Then she asked:

"I say, Lucille, is he handsome?"

"Who?"

"Don't be so mysterious. I don't know his name, but the man in your heart."

"There isn't,"—began Lucille bravely, and then she became conscious that she was trying to tell a lie—a thing she abhorred. "Please don't ask me any questions, Agatha dear," she pleaded finally.

"I won't tell."

"I know you won't, but I have really nothing to tell you."

"It was funny you got the ring, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe in signs, Lucille? You know

Maggie got a ring last Christmas, at Ellen Hunt's party."

"So she did; I remember she told me about it."

"And she's engaged in less than a year. I wonder if you'll be."

"I'm sure I won't. The charm doesn't always work."

"I thought it did. I wish you'd got it last year instead of Maggie; then you'd have got Jerry."

Lucille thought of the last evening she and Gerald were together at Asquith. Perhaps if Bess had not interrupted them, he would have told her that he loved her, and she would have believed him.

Would she ever see him again? Bess wanted her to come to New York for a visit during the winter, but she felt she could not go. It would be like throwing herself in his way, and she knew she would never go to him, unless he came to her first. Some days it seemed as if she could not bear her life of longing; and yet she was powerless to change the current of her affairs.

Days passed, weeks passed. October, with its falling leaves and golden sunsets, came, and went. November, with its whistling winds and sharp frosts crackling the bare branches of the trees, was nearly over before Lucille heard of Gerald again, and then it was through Bess. Bess wanted her to come to town for December.

"There is so much going on," she wrote, "I am bound to give you a good time. In fact, every one says it is going to be the gayest winter in years. I saw Gerald Townsend at the Horse Show. He sat all evening in Mrs. Hastings' box. Later on, when we went to the Waldorf, he came up and spoke to me and asked me if I had heard from you lately.

He is beginning to show his age, my dear. I was surprised to see how gray he has grown since August."

Lucille wondered if he were suffering—if he felt even a little of that anguish which was consuming her.

She did not go to New York. She knew how expensive an outfit would be that would last her for a brief season in the city, and she felt that she ought not to ask her grandparents for so much money.

When, on Christmas morning, she received a large bunch of violets with Gerald's card and the season's greeting, into her face, which had grown rather pale of late, there came an exquisite flush born of a renewed happiness. He had not forgotten her. He could not forget her, and hope, which is so hard to kill, raised its head and whispered words of encouragement.

The next day, as she returned from her usual walk, her grandmother met her at the door.

"Lucille dear, there's a gentleman from New York here," she began; but Lucille did not give her time to finish.

"Gerald!" she cried, and rushed through the hall into the parlor; but the tall man who rose to greet her was not Gerald Townsend but Jack Reyling.

"Lucille!" He took her extended hand in his, gravely. He had heard her cry Gerald's name, but he had not come to Avondale to-day on his own account.

"I am the bearer of bad news," he said. "My dear brother died last week, and poor Bess is broken-hearted. We can do nothing with her, and I have come to ask you if you will go to her."

Lucille was stunned. She scarcely realized what

Jack's words meant. She heard his voice as if in a dream; there was a ringing in her ears; a mist swam before her eyes, and she feared she was going to faint. She sank down in a chair, and covered her face with her hands.

"Poor Bess! O my poor Bessie!" she moaned.

CHAPTER X.

The first violence of her grief having passed, Bess clung pathetically to Lucille.

Bess's home life had not been the happiest. Her mother, left a widow early in life, married again, and between Bess and her stepfather there existed a mutual dislike. She had been sent to a boarding-school to be kept out of his sight, and this had not increased her regard for him. Now, in her great trouble, her mother was anxious to have her come home, but Bess was firm in her refusal to do so.

"He would drive me mad," she said, and her mother sighed. She was a pretty, faded little woman, who flattered herself that she looked scarcely older than her daughter; and she dressed in the most youthful fashion.

"Lucille will stay with me. We are going south next week, as I couldn't bear to stay in New York now."

The sentence ended with a sob. She wondered how she was going to live without Bert. It still seemed incredible to her that he could really be dead. His illness had lasted only three days. Pneumonia, the doctors said, but to the poor stricken woman who mourned him, it seemed like sorcery.

"He was perfectly well on Sunday," she told

Lucille, "and on Thursday they put him in a coffin. Do you think it could have been a mistake, Lucille? How could he die so quickly? You know how big and strong he was!"

Lucille took the trembling sobbing form of her friend in her arms and tried to soothe her. In the face of this terrible sorrow, the memory of her own grew dim. At least death had not separated her from Gerald.

Cheerfully she acceded to all Bess's plans, and her grandparents unselfishly gave her permission to remain with Mrs. Reyling as long as she would.

Just before they left New York, Lucille discovered Gerald's card among the many which had been left in token of sympathy.

Six weeks of Florida was enough, and then the young widow decided to go to Lakewood where she engaged a suite at the Lakewood Hotel and had the horses and carriages sent down from town.

Jack was there to greet his sister-in-law upon her arrival and the meeting between them was most affecting. Although ten years younger, Jack resembled Bert strongly. He was slighter and more active, but the likeness was remarkable.

Between Jack and Lucille, all constraint died naturally and, as he came down from New York, twice a week, a new and lasting friendship sprang up between them. Bert's large estate had to be settled and, as Bess knew nothing about monetary affairs, Lucille was often called upon to make explanations and to settle vexed questions. Bess absolutely refused to concern herself with the management of the property, showing that Jack was best fitted to take Bert's place.

Gradually their position changed. During Bert's lifetime, Bess had looked upon Jack as a younger

brother, forgetting that he was her senior by nearly five years. She had patronized him, planned his future for him, and assumed a maternal air which had greatly amused both brothers. Now all this was altered. She began to depend upon him, look to him for advice, cling to him naturally as a woman does to her nearest male relative, and Jack seemed quite willing to accept the trust she offered him.

Neither of course perceived to what end this change of affairs was tending, but Lucille, with an outsider's clearer vision, saw, and in her heart rejoiced. If Jack, in time, should fully occupy Bert's place, what a happy ending it would be for both of them.

Bess's plan to wed Lucille to Jack had proved futile. Jack himself had realized this, even before he had heard her cry Gerald with that accent of rapture he would never forget, and he was quite willing to accept the new friendship that Lucille so freely offered to him.

Nelly Allaire arrived at Lakewood for Lent, and after this Bess's rooms became the rendezvous for that coterie of the smart set, which was spending the penitential period in the land o' pines.

A few evenings later, there was to be a concert, given under the patronage of several New York women for some charitable affair, and Bess decided that Lucille should attend chaperoned by Nelly.

Lucille protested. "I won't leave you alone all the evening, Bess," she said. "I don't care for concerts."

"I won't be alone. Jack is coming down; we have some business to settle, so I insist upon your going."

That ended it and Lucille went. As their party entered the music-room a pretty girl, with great dark eyes, rushed up to them.

"Nelly Allaire, are you stopping here?" she cried delightedly.

"Of course I am; where are you stopping?"

"At the Laurel in the Pines, and it is dead slow; but Isabel likes it. Hullo, Tom!" and she held out her hand frankly.

"May," said Nelly, "this is Bess Reyling's friend, Miss Gaines. Lucille, Miss Hastings."

May regarded Lucille with curiosity. She had heard a rumor of Gerald's new fancy, and Lucille on her part felt a keen interest in Mrs. Hastings' stepdaughter.

"Is Isabel here?" asked Nelly.

"She's coming later. I came over with the Dinsmores."

"Are they here, too? How fine! Let's go over," and Nelly and May crossed the room, followed by Lucille and Tom.

The concert began, but Lucille heard nothing. She was wondering whether Gerald would come with Mrs. Hastings. O! to see him again, if only in a crowd like this! Even such small comfort would be welcome. Suddenly she became conscious of being watched, and upon turning her head she discovered him looking at her. He was standing behind the chairs occupied by the party, and the joy in his face as their eyes met gave her a happiness she had not known for months.

When the first part was over there was a general moving of chairs. A buzz of conversation filled the air and Lucille knew that her hour had come. She heard Nelly's gay greeting and then she looked up into Gerald's face and smiled.

"Miss Gaines, this is indeed a surprise!" he said, taking her proffered hand. "May I sit down?"

He took the chair Tom had vacated.

"What are you doing here? With whom are you staying?" he asked.

Lucille told him.

"So you are Mrs. Reyling's ministering angel now? That seemed to be your mission to me at one time. I hoped it might have been for all time. There, do not be distressed. I have no right to resume our conversation where we left off, last summer, but seeing you here has made me forget myself," he added, half plaintively.

Lucille stole a glance at him. Yes, he was altered, his hair was quite gray at the sides, and his eyes were sadder than ever.

He went on talking about nothing, little generalities that he used to cover up a dangerous tendency to talk about himself and her. Before he had asked her a single question of importance, the intermission was over, and he went back to his place, behind Mrs. Hastings. When the concert was ended he came up to her again.

"My friends are in a hurry to get away. When shall I see you again?"

"Mrs. Reyling and I will be here for some weeks longer," she answered.

"Then I may call?"

"We shall always be glad to see you." And then he left her.

Lucille gazed after Mrs. Hastings curiously, and saw a tall, magnificent blonde of superb figure; a regal woman of the world; and yet she felt no jealousy.

"He is her friend," she assured herself, "that is all. I know it."

Nelly and Tom accompanied her to Bess's rooms, where supper had been ordered.

Nelly recounted the meeting with relish. "Belle Hastings could have eaten me," she said, "she looked so mad when she saw me. Funny she tries to keep May and me apart; and then to see us chumming together as of old just knocked her out. She looks fine; doesn't show her age a bit. Bet she touches up though; no woman of thirty-five has hair like that. Of course, the inevitable G. T. was with her. I wonder if that's quite straight! Otherwise, why don't they marry? I won't shut up. Bess, what ails you?"

Lucille, who had left the room, returned in time to hear the last part of Nelly's speech and, as the awful meaning of the words came to her, she grew white to her lips. Then the entrance of the waiters with supper put an end to an uncomfortable scene, but it was some time before Lucille regained her composure.

CHAPTER XI.

The next day Gerald called.

He came at five o'clock, and found, to his surprise, the Allaires and Mary Hastings there.

Mary said to him wickedly, as he passed her chair: "Widows seem to be in your line, Gerald!" and Nelly Allaire immediately inquired for Isabel.

Lucille was seated as usual by the tea-table and, after he had spoken a few words to Bess, he came over to her side.

"How do you like your tea, Mr. Townsend? With rum?" She waited breathlessly for his an-

swer. Tom Allaire always took rum in his; but she hoped better of Gerald. It was a foolish thing upon which to pin so much faith; but then she had idealized this man.

"Thank you, I prefer one lump of sugar and a piece of lemon," he answered, and her heart gave a throb of relief. She felt as if she could not have borne it had he taken rum, like the other.

"I half hoped to find you alone. Are the others usually here?" he asked, lowering his voice.

"Always. Mrs. Allaire spends more time here than in her own rooms."

"And you do not like her any better than you did at Asquith."

"I like her less." The answer came quickly, and with such an element of disdain that Gerald smiled.

"What has she been doing—or saying, rather? for Nelly Allaire does nothing; she only talks."

"Don't you think one can do a great deal of harm by talking?"

"An immeasurable amount," he answered with pretended gravity.

"Whom has she been roasting (to use her own expression) now?"

"O, I can't tell you, but I think she is wicked."

"Who's wicked?" demanded Tom, coming up at the moment for a second cup of tea.

The other two started. They had been so absorbed in each other that they had forgotten the outside world.

"Answer that yourself, Tom, it's a conundrum," said Gerald; and then everybody laughed.

"Are you never alone? Do you not go for walks by yourself?" he asked, when they were once more together.

"Sometimes I walk around the lake in the morning," she answered shyly.

"What time will you start to-morrow morning?"

"About nine o'clock."

"When do you rise, child, at daybreak?"

"No, I generally breakfast at eight. Bess doesn't get up before eleven, and I like to be back by then; so if I walk at all, it has to be early."

"Very well, I will be there at nine."

"I can't promise, you know; Bess may wish me to do something for her."

"I will risk it. If not to-morrow, I will be there the next day. And now, good-bye."

After he had gone, Lucille felt that she had done wrong to make this appointment, but she resolved to keep it, no matter what Nelly Allaire said about him.

"I think I'd better give Isabel a pointer," said May, significantly. "Gerald's the last bean in the basket, and she'd better not take any chances with him."

"You're right, May. Besides, I'm willing to wager Lucille isn't as slow as she looks," answered Nelly.

"Who's slow?" asked Tom, who, as usual, joined them in time to hear the last word.

"O, you are, of course," answered his wife; and then they all laughed again.

CHAPTER XII.

The next morning, a dull leaden sky, and a raw wind, gave promise of snow, but Lucille did not let the weather deter her.

In her heavy black cloth skirt, which was cut ankle length for walking, and her Persian lamb Eton jacket, she defied the elements. A small cloth toque was pinned firmly on her head; her face was protected by a brown chiffon veil and she carried a muff.

Gerald was waiting for her, and his admiring eyes took in every detail of her neat costume. He even commented approvingly on her heavy calf-skin boots.

"That is the proper foot-covering," he said, as they started to walk around the lake.

"If they only didn't take such a time to lace," she added.

"They look sensible; that is the main thing. I see you are not afraid of a possible snow-storm."

Lucille laughed aloud for the first time in months.

"A country girl afraid of the snow!" she shouted. "Why, when I was a child I had a bob-sled, and there wasn't a hill around Avondale I didn't coast on."

"I can picture you in your red hood and mittens," he observed.

"No, they were blue. That's my color, you know."

"So it is; true blue for fidelity. Are you sure you have never gone back on your color?"

"Quite sure."

"Then who was mistaken?"

"I think we both were." Her answer came softly. By this time they had reached one of the sheltered seats that are plentiful along the road.

"Shall we sit down a moment, or is it too cold for you?" he asked.

"Not for a short rest."

When they were seated, Gerald began poking among the leaves and loose stones with his stick. Finally he spoke:

"When I left Asquith, you gave me permission to come to Avondale, and yet, when I wrote you there, asking when I might come, you refused me. What made you do that?"

"I did nothing of the sort," she protested, "you misunderstood me."

"Then let us come to an understanding now. I am not worthy of you, dear, but I love you. Had you come into my youth, I would have been true to you, faithful to you all my life. Now what have I to offer you? Only what is left after I have spent the greater part. It does not seem fair to you, and yet I love you. I am no longer a young man. I cannot disguise my gray hairs and crows' feet, but I love you. If you become my wife, in a few years you will probably be my nurse. I have already had twinges of gout and rheumatism, and I know that I shall be jealous of you. I shall keep you chained to my side; and I shall begrudge you any pleasure in which I cannot share. I am not rich, as the world counts wealth, but I can give you a comfortable home. Still, I cannot offer you the luxury that Bess Reyling enjoys. This seems a strange love-making, and yet I must open your eyes fully to the sacrifice I am asking of you. Sweetheart, if I were not sure of you, I would not dare point out all my defects. I love you. Will you trust yourself to me?"

While he was speaking, he had watched her narrowly, and now as he finished, his arm stole round her waist and drew her to him.

She did not answer, but nestling close to his side, her head touched his shoulder.

"Lucille! My love!" he murmured, and then he kissed her.

When they reached the hotel, Gerald refused to go in, but promised to return about three o'clock. As Bess's guests usually came at four, this would give them an hour to themselves.

Lucille begged to be allowed to keep their engagement a secret for a few weeks.

"I will tell Bess," she said, "but not the others. You don't know how they tease!"

To this plan Gerald readily acquiesced, well knowing that it was a secret that could not be long kept.

Then Lucille slipped quietly into her own room and began hurriedly to remove her wraps which were covered with snow.

"Is that you, Lou?" called Bess.

"Yes, I'll be there in a moment," she answered nervously, but Bess did not wait. Coming into the room, she gazed in astonishment at Lucille's wet and bedraggled garments.

"For Heaven's sake," she cried, "where have you been? Didn't you know it was snowing? Why didn't you call Watson to help you?"

Lucille was busy with a hat pin.

"Wait until I get on my dry clothes," she said, nervously, "and I'll tell you everything."

"So there's something to tell, is there? I'll make a wager with myself that it has to do with Gerald Townsend."

The girl blushed.

"I knew it," Bess went on. "You certainly haven't been so mad as to stay out with him all this morning? Is this going to be a repetition of Asquith, Lucille?"

Mrs. Reyling sat down. She was determined to have this matter out with Lucille then and there.

The girl should not compromise herself for want of a friendly warning. She had no faith in Gerald. He had always seemed to her a trifler,—one who played skilfully with edged tools, certain that he would not wound himself in any encounter. She had been half impatient of Bert's loyal championship of his friend, and she wondered why men liked him and most women found him so fascinating.

"He is everything you detest," she had said one day to Lucille; "sarcastic, selfish, a scoffer at good, in fact, a hardened man of the world. What do you see in him to admire?"

"The man himself. You see the shell in which he screens himself from the world, but he has shown his other side to me," she could have retorted, but as she was unable openly to defend him, she had made no answer to Bess's accusation. Now, however, she had the right, and she would assert it.

"Bess dear," she said, with a new dignity, "you are mistaken. Mr. Townsend has asked me to be his wife, and I have consented."

Bess stared at her blankly, too astonished for words.

Then Lucille threw her arms about her friend's neck.

"Bess, dear Bess," she pleaded, "say something —congratulate me."

"It's so amazing! I can't get over it—to think that you should have won Gerald Townsend, or rather, dear," she added hastily, "that he should have won you. Of course I am glad, for your sake, Lou, for I know you love him, but it's all a puzzle to me yet. I can't get it through this stupid brain of mine."

Nevertheless, Mrs. Reyling was undoubtedly pleased. She had long ago given up all idea of a

union between Lucille and Jack, and, although she wanted to keep Lucille near her, she knew of no man in their set who was likely to appeal to the girl. If she married Gerald, she would live in New York, and Bess would see her frequently. On the whole, it was very satisfactory, although she wondered how Isabel Hastings would take Gerald's defection.

She admired Isabel immensely, but she was a little jealous of the superior position Mrs. Hastings had claimed and occupied. Isabel was a born leader, wealthy enough to indulge every caprice, and Bess, who also had dreams of leadership—realized for a time at Asquith—secretly envied the older woman.

When Gerald came that afternoon the young widow was also in the sitting-room, but, after a while, she excused herself, and left the lovers alone. Gerald drew Lucille to him gently, and, as he clasped her in his arms and saw how entirely she surrendered herself, a deep joy sprang up in his heart, bringing with it the resolve to be worthy of so great a gift.

Finally he spoke of Isabel.

"Mrs. Hastings is coming this afternoon with May," he said. "I have not told her of our engagement, but I think she has guessed it, so when she suggested coming here to-day, I knew it was to meet you."

In fact the first glimpse of him, as he appeared at luncheon, had told Isabel the truth. His face was radiant, and his manners spoke more plainly than words of his new happiness.

She had leaned towards him slightly, and whispered: "It is settled, and you are very happy, Gerald?"

And then quite forgetting his promise to Lucille he had told her that she was right. In truth Isabel had for so many years been his confidante, that he scarcely realized that Lucille's injunction could apply to her.

Afterwards he said to her, with comic dismay: "You have guessed my secret, Belle, and I had promised the dear little girl I would tell no one."

"Your secret is safe with me," she replied; "I think I shall call on Mrs. Reyling this afternoon. Shall I meet you there?"

The gentle raillery in her tone deceived him, and he did not guess that her heart was breaking. Indeed it required all of Isabel's wonderful self-control to keep the bitterness out of her eyes, and enable her to act towards him, as if she were glad of his happiness. That might come in time, but now she was suffering; and so she made haste to leave the room, preferring to be alone with her new misery.

She had hoped against hope, all the while knowing that it was vain. Beauty, devotion, wealth, intellect, charm, all had been arrayed against youth; and youth had conquered.

As, a little after five o'clock, she entered Bess's rooms, she was looking her best. Her gown of velvet revealed every curve of her magnificent figure. A velvet hat to match emphasized the brilliancy of her beautiful golden hair, and the rich sables at her throat gave her an added air of elegance. Her complexion was still wonderfully fair and the blue of her eyes and the red bow of her lips had never been more vivid. She greeted Bess cordially and then turned to Lucille. A rapid glance took the girl's every detail, and still she wondered at Gerald's choice,

Lucille was nervous to a degree. This was the woman whose name they connected with Gerald's. This was the love of his youth. How beautiful she still was; and how insignificant the girl felt in contrast! After she had gone Lucille asked Gerald:

"Is she the woman you showed your book to?"

"No, that was another woman."

"Another!" There was a note of jealousy in Lucille's voice that brought a smile to his lips.

"O dear, there were so many women who came into your life before I did!" she said dejectedly.

"Sweetheart, they belong to the past."

"And I to your future. Well, they sha'n't trouble me, I promise you. I was your choice, was I not? Out of the whole world, you chose me."

And the rapture of it brought a mist before her eyes.

CHAPTER XIII.

Then opened for them a chapter of delight such as few men and women are permitted to experience. They spent long days together: days in which each was unconscious of all the world, save that other adored one. They took delightful rambles around the lake in the early morning before the rest of their set were awake. They went for pleasant drives through the odorous pine woods, or along the sandy road to Torn's River. They spent their afternoons in Bess's cosy sitting-room, and their evenings wandering through the glass-covered piazzas or ensconced in some secluded corner living out their dream of love.

Lucille's thorough unconventionality made these

long hours together possible, and Bess, knowing her friend, forebore to put any restraint upon their intercourse. To Gerald she was so ingenuous that the freedom they were permitted to enjoy intensified his pleasure. She sought him eagerly, not dreaming that after he had once declared his love, she should hold back the full measure of hers. She came to him for knowledge, and accepted his decree as though his wisdom were infinite.

"Gerald says so," conclusively settled any argument for her; and she, who had been so reserved, was now childishly exuberant.

Now that Lucille was so wrapped up in Gerald, Bess began to experience a sensation of loneliness, and Jack's visits were more welcome than ever. The Allaires and the Hastings had returned to town, and Mrs. Reyling, arguing that she had sacrificed herself enough for Lucille, now spoke of also returning.

At the first word, Lucille awoke from her trance.

"How selfish I have been!" she cried remorsefully. "I promise never to leave you alone again."

She insisted that Bess should accompany them on their drive that afternoon, and after dinner she refused decisively to be beguiled into going out to see the new moon.

When she bade Gerald good-night, he whispered anxiously: "Have I offended you, sweetheart?"

"No. Why do you ask that?"

"Because you decline to be alone with me five minutes to-day."

"O Gerald, I told you the reason. Poor Bess is lonesome. For ten days, ever since we have been engaged, I've neglected her dreadfully, and you know I'm her guest."

"Ten days. How time flies! I am not going to

leave you with Bess much longer. I shall want you all to myself, very soon," he said; and then he took her in his arms and kissed her.

Ten days, and still Lucille had not written to her grandparents, nor allowed Gerald to do so.

"It must come from me," she had said to him. "It will be such a surprise to them. They don't even dream of such a thing. Father thinks I shall always stay with them, and he often wonders what I will do after he is gone."

Gerald let her have her way, and he waited patiently, chiding her gently now and then for her procrastination.

The next two days were a repetition of the first, and then Bess rebelled.

"I never realized before the truth of that old adage: 'Two is company, three is none.' You're the dearest girl in the world, Lucille, but I prefer to let Gerald have you alone instead of trying to make a third in the party," she said, with a return of her old manner.

Slowly Bess was getting over her great loss. There were days when her trouble seemed as great as at first, but these days were rarer now than formerly, and she was beginning to realize that she was still young, and the world is a very nice place to live in when one has youth and beauty and a tolerable fortune. So, when Jack came down that evening, Bess announced her intention of returning to New York.

"See about a suite at the Cambridge, Jack," she said, "for I simply couldn't live in that house again. As soon as I am able, I will have the furniture stored and rent the place. Every room in it means Bert to me," and then she cried a little, and Jack put his arm around her, and comforted her.

"I don't know what I'd do if I hadn't you, Jack," she said tearfully, and then Jack promised that she should always have him to depend upon, and somehow that assurance comforted her wonderfully.

CHAPTER XIV.

News travels quickly in a small place and, the day after Lucille wrote to her grandparents, every one in Avondale had heard of her engagement.

"It was the ring," declared Agatha Dean, "signs like those never fail."

Mrs. Gaines moved briskly round the little house. A glad light shone in her eyes and a half smile rested on her lips. She thanked God that her prayers had been answered, and her child had found happiness. No selfish feeling marred her perfect sympathy with Lucille's young love. She was willing, nay glad, to relinquish her guardianship over the child she had brought up in love and faith. She had no doubt of Gerald's worthiness. That he was Lucille's choice was sufficient for her, and she bustled through the rooms, anxious that everything should be in perfect order when her granddaughter came home.

Dr. Gaines, however, grieved a great deal. He hated to give up the child. She had been theirs all for so long, that he had never considered the probability of her some day leaving them.

The three old men shook their heads sagely, and wondered what they would do without her. Finally Mrs. Gaines lost patience.

"I declare," she cried, "to hear you talk you'd think the child had committed a crime by wanting

to get married. Did you ever think that you did the same thing when you were young? and that every girl's parents feel bad when the man asks her to leave her home for his. Don't the Bible teach us that a woman should forsake her kindred, and cleave only to her husband?"

"But to think of our little Lucille leaving us for good, mother. Neither you nor I has much longer to live, and who knows when she goes away if we'll ever see her again," said Dr. Gaines sadly.

"Nonsense, John. Hasn't she been away four months now, and isn't she coming home to-morrow?" answered his wife triumphantly. "New York isn't Africa, and besides, you know the child's tender heart will never let her forget us. Now go on with your game, and don't sadden the child when she comes home full of happiness."

That was the first time Mrs. Gaines had ever spoken reprovingly to her husband, and after she had finished she wondered at her temerity. Like most submissive women, she was vulnerable where her offspring was concerned, and she was ready to defy the husband she reverenced, for Lucille's sake.

One glance into the girl's face, and she felt repaid for the sacrifice she had made.

"Gerald arrives to-morrow," announced Lucille; "he wanted to come with me, but I wouldn't let him. I wanted to be all alone with you the first evening."

She was seated between the two old people, one hand in each of theirs, and she was trying to tell them about her engagement.

"I have loved him a long while," she said, "ever since Bess's wedding; and he took a fancy to me too, and now I can scarcely wait until morrow, I want you to see him so much."

She had written a long account of the circumstances, and had described him fully, but she had to go over it all, and indeed she was not loath to do so. Her heart was so full of him that her lips could not keep back his name.

As she knelt beside her bed to say her evening prayer, Mrs. Gaines came softly into the room. She gazed tenderly on the kneeling, white-robed figure, and murmured silently: "God bless and keep her always as pure in heart as she is now."

"Dearie, I couldn't sleep without asking you something," she began as Lucille rose from her knees; but the girl interrupted her, saying:

"I know what you want to ask, mother. Yes, I told him."

"What did he say?"

"He said it made no difference to him; he loved me just as I was," and Lucille's eyes drooped and her face colored deeply as she remembered Gerald's words.

The next morning she awoke early. The birds were singing in the cherry-trees outside of her window—trees that were now in full flower, and the sweet odor from which permeated her room. She leaned out of the casement to see the lawn covered with tiny velvety blades of grass and the crocus and hyacinth beds overflowing with bloom. Honeysuckle clambered up the trellis and mingled its perfume with the cherry blossoms, while two great bushes of syringa, on either side of the garden walk, were bursting with white buds.

Back of the house was an arbor covered with grape-vines, and back of that was the kitchen garden where she could see Jane picking the first early strawberries for breakfast.

That afternoon Lucille drove to the station to

meet Gerald. As a rule she walked, but, in order to bring Gerald's valise with them, she drove her grandfather's old horse hitched to a phaeton which had seen long years of service.

The train pulled in promptly and Gerald was the only passenger to alight. He caught sight of Lucille at once and came quickly towards her, the porter following with his bag.

Lucille avoided the main thoroughfare as they drove home, knowing how the town would stand or gape to see them pass.

CHAPTER XV.

Nelly Allaire and May Hastings were lunching with Bess, at the Waldorf. It was the middle of June, and the three friends were in town for the day only.

Bess was full of Lucille's wedding, which had taken place ten days before.

"Do tell us all about it. I always said that girl wasn't slow," said Nelly.

"Don't interrupt, Nell; save your comments till later," interposed May, who was intensely interested.

"Well, it was a very quiet wedding," began Bess.

"A day affair?"

"Yes. At four o'clock, and afterwards we had a dinner. Lucille, of course, wore white—white mull, and she was the prettiest bride I ever saw. There were no bridesmaids and Townsend Gray was the best man. You knew that?"

"He's Gerald's second cousin, isn't he? I met him last year. He's secretary or something at the

Court of St. James," said May, who never forgot a name once heard, nor a face once seen.

"Yes; he came over from London especially to oblige Gerald as they used to be great chums."

"Well, what did he give her?" asked Nelly. This was the main question.

"First of all, his mother's jewels, all reset, and then one of the handsomest string of pearls I ever saw."

"Pearls!" cried Nelly. "How dreadful! Why, she'll have rank luck."

"They are her favorite stones as well as his. Her engagement ring was a large pearl, surrounded with diamonds."

"He's off," commented Nelly, touching her forehead significantly.

"Be still, Nell, and let Bess finish," interposed May. "What about her trousseau?"

"That wasn't very important. She got a few of her things in New York but, as they are going to Paris, she'll get most of her clothes there."

"Are they going abroad on their wedding tour? what bad form!" This from the irrepressible Nelly. Bess ignored the interruption.

"Her going-away gown was of blue cloth, braided, with a vest and revers of white. It was simply stunning, and you have no idea what a change a real swell gown made in Lucille. When she comes back to town in the fall, you girls will have to look to your laurels."

"O, I'm not afraid," and Nelly tossed her head carelessly, "she's not"——

"For Heaven's sake, drop it, Nell," and May covered her ears with her hands. Nelly laughed good-naturedly. She and May had tiffs continually, but each was devoted to the other.

"You have no idea, girls, what a delicious place Avondale is. It's the quaintest town, awfully wide awake, though the Gaineses belong to the old-conservative part of it. The people are very nice, not our set of course, but still much nicer and more up to date than you'd expect to find in a country town."

"They are just as much in love as ever? Somehow, I never could feel sure of the durability of Gerald's affections." May sighed, as she said this.

"You needn't worry on Lucille's account, May. I never saw a man more in love. He can't take his eyes off her."

"I know that kind. Tom began it, when we were first married, and now look at him."

"Whose fault is that, Nell? Besides, Tom isn't like Gerald Townsend."

"Thank the Lord, he isn't."

"Gerald is devoted to her, and she just worships him. It made me feel terribly to see them together. He waits on her, and treats her just as Bert did me."

There was a pause, and then Bess resumed: "You've no idea how much the people think of Lucille up there. There are two old men, cronies of her grandfather, who just idolize her. They looked so forlorn the day of the wedding, they were positively ridiculous; and then there was a lame girl who talked a lot of rubbish about angels and stars and things."

"Where are they going when they return from Europe?"

"They are going to stay over all summer."

"What for?"

"To travel around. Lucille has never been abroad, you know."

"Abroad to me simply means London, Paris clothes, right about face, and home again."

"Will they take a house in town?"

"That is their idea at present. They won't return until November, and then they'll take a furnished house for the winter."

"Has Gerald Townsend money?"

"I guess he has enough."

"He used to be pretty wild, and I heard he got into some scrape that took him a long while to get out of."

"Well, you heard wrong, Nell; Gerald has quite a nice income from his father's estate, and the property is increasing in value each year," volunteered May.

CHAPTER XVI.

Two years of perfect happiness rarely falls to any woman's lot, but afterwards Lucille looked back upon the beginning of her married life and realized that for that space of time she had been completely content. Her disposition fitted her to enjoy, and she took all and gave freely, unquestioningly. This was what marriage meant to her. If other women were unhappy, either their husbands were not like Gerald, or else the fault lay in themselves. As for him, this was the ideal life he had dreamed of, and every day deepened his love for his young wife. His was indeed more love for love's sake than a man's last passion is apt to be.

They wandered through Europe leisurely, and it was all so new to her that he, jaded man of the world that he was, found pleasure in her delight.

He was wont to plan little trips and to show as much eagerness to win her approval, as if he were not certain of it beforehand.

One bright morning Lucille found herself in Interlaken, with the wondrous white-robed Jungfrau before her. There towered the majestic snow-maiden, telling her story of Infinity to the countless multitude who gazed upon her. Many passed, without heeding the lesson she taught, but Lucille, whose susceptible nature made her capable of understanding, gazed in awe, while tears slowly filled her eyes.

Gerald watched her tenderly.

"How truly the great works of Nature show us our own littleness! Man's best is after all so insignificant. His work is of to-day. Nature endures forever," he said, and Lucille thanked him with an eloquent glance. Her heart was too full to permit her to speak, but she blessed him for his comprehension of her emotion. It made her feel that, in truth, they were of one mind.

All day she was quiet and subdued; she no longer dared to laugh and sing, for the cold white Jungfrau murmured: "To-day you are here, and to-morrow you die, but I—I am eternity." She began to realize how frail was her hold upon human happiness. To-day she was here and Gerald's love was hers; but to-morrow was in the awful unseen future. What did that have in store for her? She did not fear death. That only meant a temporary separation, after which came Heaven, and a long eternity of life together. It was not death, but life, that sometimes struck cold terror to her heart.

"Take me away, Gerald, I am afraid," she whispered, clinging to him in a sudden paroxysm of fear.

"Certainly, sweetheart. Where shall we go now?" he answered as indulgently as one might speak to a child.

"I don't care, only take me away from this cold, cold, pitiless mountain, somewhere where there are life and laughter, even if the life is artificial and the laughter mocking."

So he took her to Monte Carlo. The band was playing in the Casino, and the terraces were thronged with gaily dressed women and men of all nationalities. A bell sounded, and the people hastened through the doors and disappeared.

"What was the bell for, Gerald?" asked Lucille.

"A play has begun," he answered, carelessly.

"Is there a theatre here?"

"No, dear, I mean the gambling, roulette, and *rouge et noir*," he explained. "Would you like to see the tables?"

The experiment had succeeded, and she had successfully shaken off the feeling of terror with which the Alps had inspired her. She was again the happy child Gerald was accustomed to. Ever since her marriage, her shy seriousness had given place to this sparkling joy, and she was to him a never-ending source of delight.

She sat thinking a moment before she answered his question. She had heard of Monte Carlo, and her own sense of right and wrong protested against the mere sign of approval that her presence in the gambling-halls would imply.

"Well, dear, shall we go in?" Gerald asked again, not understanding her hesitation. And then she yielded.

If he saw no harm in it, perhaps she was over conscientious, so she rose obediently, and let him throw her fleecy wrap over his arm. She gathered

up her fan and gloves and passed through the doorway.

The gorgeously decorated rooms, the interested spectators, the crowds at the tables, composed of all classes of men and women, interested her. A man risking his all on a final twirl of the ivory; a woman seeking forgetfulness; idlers trifling for a few francs; all were jostled together, breathing the same air, having but one interest. "Messieurs, faîtes votre jeu! . . . . Le jeu est fait! Rien ne va plus." A moment of breathless expectation and then the metallic voice of the croupier, "Rouge gagne," and it was all over, to begin again, not to finish, until the allotted hours passed, or some fortunate individual should break the bank. The color rose in Lucille's cheeks. The excitement fired her blood.

"Gerald, let me play," she cried, in an intense whisper; but he, looking down at the eager flushed face, drew her away.

"We will go out and breathe the fresh air, and I will tell you the saddest story I have ever known, and my part in it," he said, ignoring her request.

Lucille submitted silently. She was already half ashamed of the fierce impulse, which had overcome all of her inherited notions of right. She wondered miserably if he thought less of her for her foolish request, and when they had left the Casino behind them and were strolling in the gardens, she cried, "Gerald dear, forgive me. I don't know what came into my head, in those awful rooms. It seemed as if I were not myself. Isn't it dreadful to think I could be so carried away?—that wickedness should seem so alluring?"

He drew her closer to his side, and pressed warmly the little hand that stole into his.

"Forget it, Lucille; and now instead of telling you my story, which is a pitiful one, we will get a carriage, and take a long drive; the day is so beautiful. How would you like that?"

She assented to this, as to every other proposal he made, and they were soon driving rapidly along the smooth highroad to Nice.

At Nice, Gerald ran across several acquaintances, but he managed to avoid most of them. He wanted Lucille all to himself at present. Later on he would share her with the world, but now he was jealously anxious to keep her away from outside influences. They were sufficient unto themselves. He was her first love, her hero, and she was still a dream of his lost youth. He had read and studied a great deal in a desultory fashion and, as he had a retentive memory, things came back to him, until he himself was half surprised at the amount of knowledge he held stored away. Lucille's demands upon his storehouse were constant, and he took pleasure in being able to give her all she asked for. Her mind expanded under his guidance, and she began to look at the world with new interest. He kept all traces of cynicism out of his conversation. "Let her retain her illusions as long as she can; she will lose them soon enough, without help from me," he thought, for the beauty of her young faith was one of her greatest charms.

They were never dull, and Gerald began to wonder, as he realized that his married life was so free from ennui. He had feared that this, like all the other phases of his life, would soon begin to feel the blighting touch of indifference.

Lucille had that rare tact that enables a woman to know when to keep silent, and she rarely interrupted his moods of introspection. If she were near

she would sit quietly with her book, or else nestle close to him, with her head against his shoulder, waiting until he should awake from his reverie. She was content to be near him, though she might not share his thoughts. Sometimes she protested that he did not take her seriously enough.

"I am not a child any longer, Gerald. Love has made me a woman," she would say.

"You are truly adorable," he would respond, and then catch her up in his arms and cover her face with kisses.

Their leisurely ramble through Europe came to an end at last, and, when they returned to New York, he was quite ready to resume his old life; she was eager, with the optimism of youth, to begin a new phase of existence.

"After you have turned the corner I wonder how you will like it," said Gerald, musingly.

"We have passed the rock of matrimony safely, at all events," she answered, "and, with you beside me, I am willing to face anything."

CHAPTER XVII.

The vague conception of a home which had at times flitted across Gerald's mind was at length an accomplished fact. On one of the cross streets, east of Fifth Avenue, he set up his household gods. There he secured a very pretty little house, which he proceeded to furnish lavishly.

"Can we afford all this?" asked Lucille, anxiously.

"Of course, dear; our credit is excellent. No

man of sense ever pays bills when they are due. It establishes a bad precedent. Some day he may not have the ready money, and presto! his credit is gone. Don't worry your pretty little head over such matters, Lucille. Choose what you like; the task of paying belongs to me."

But Lucille was not satisfied. At home she had been accustomed to different ways of managing. Debt was looked upon as a disgrace, and she had been taught that to purchase, without the means of payment, was dishonorable.

Still, Gerald, of course, must be right. Her loyal little heart never doubted him; only their points of view differed.

After she had been in New York a week, she and Gerald went to Avondale. He stayed three days and then returned to the city. Lucille missed him sorely. Even the delight of her grandparents at having her with them again failed to compensate her for Gerald's absence. At the end of the week, she begged him to come for her and take her "home." Home was where he was; and she left Avondale with scarcely a shadow of regret.

Bess was in town, and the two friends saw each other constantly. Mrs. Hastings came, willing to be of service, and her cordial manner soon put Lucille at ease. Isabel had fought her battle and conquered, and now to her Gerald's happiness was more than her own. There was a strong element of the maternal about her love for him, and she crucified the flesh willingly. No one knew what she had suffered; and no one sympathized with her. May, with her shrewd common-sense, guessed a little of her stepmother's suffering, but her own nature was too shallow to permit her to fully comprehend the older woman's sacrifice.

Isabel had one thought now, to make Lucille a success, so that Gerald's pride in her should be justified. The young wife's jealousy had died in the knowledge of her husband's absolute devotion, and she willingly believed that if he had ever cared for Isabel, it was long ago, and the affection had been of such a trivial nature that it need now cause her no anxiety. So she met Isabel freely, and Gerald in his heart rejoiced that the two women he honored most should thus come together. He knew how much Isabel's counsel would be to a girl like Lucille, and the older woman's assured position made her an invaluable friend.

So it was quite natural that Lucille's first social appearance should be made at a dinner given by Mrs. Hastings.

She invited only those who would be of service to the bride, and, as she glanced with satisfaction at the guests assembled, she realized that they represented the best and oldest families in the social register. Lucille, in one of the French gowns Gerald had chosen for her in Paris, burst upon her new sphere, like some fair flower. Her face, radiant with happiness, attracted all eyes, and her charm of manner, aided by her great desire to please Gerald's friends, produced the looked-for effect.

"She will do, Gerald," whispered Isabel, leaning slightly towards him, and acknowledging with a sigh the girl's surpassing loveliness.

"I never doubted that, Belle. Nevertheless we both have you to thank for successfully launching her upon the social high seas. She might have run aground had she been left to her own management," returned Gerald; and then his eyes caught Lucille's, and they interchanged one of those glances that partake of the nature of a mute caress.

Lucille adapted herself readily to her new circumstances. After the first wonder passed, she accepted everything as a matter of course, including her elegantly appointed brougham and her French maid.

Her grandparents refused to leave Avondale to visit her, so she visited them once or twice a month. She was thoroughly unspoiled by the attention she was receiving, and she still lived in her dream world of perfect content.

Secretly Gerald marvelled that she could appear so thoroughly a woman of the world and yet, in her heart, be the flower of innocence that had first attracted him. Not that she was ignorant of vice. She knew that it existed, but she put all thought of it away from her, as if it could never by any possibility touch even the hem of her garments.

Men made love to her, but she either accepted their protestations as a joke, or failed utterly to get at their real meaning; and those who were repulsed wondered if she were really innocent, or simply skilful at fence. She made few real friendships, her nature asking too much for the ordinary gifts to satisfy her, but her visiting list was as large as she could well manage.

Her tact was exquisite. She never was known to say an unkind thing, and she always had a pleasant word for everybody. Instinctively she set shy people at their ease and drew out their best. She never appeared loud, and rudeness was utterly foreign to her nature.

Bess and she met now upon a more equal footing. Mrs. Reyling realized that Lucille was no longer to be patronized, and she accepted the new order of things gracefully. After her first year of widowhood was over, she began to talk of Jack.

Lucille, who had been expecting it, was not surprised. Bess's nature craved love. She was of the clinging order of femininity, and she was quite ready to lavish on Jack the wealth of adoration she had formerly given Bert. Nelly Allaire and Tom had taken a place in the country, and were devoting themselves to out-of-door sports. May Hastings was still unmarried, and she announced boldly that, from what she had seen of matrimony, she had come to the conclusion it was not what it was cracked up to be, and for her part she was going to remain single, and live always with Isabel.

Isabel, hearing this, shook her head sadly, and wondered why this had to be added to her already heavy burden.

"Marriage is the natural end of woman," she protested.

"That is it," said May sagely. "And I don't propose to make an end of myself yet awhile."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"If I were to begin life over again, I should marry between twenty-five and thirty," said Gerald, as he flicked the ashes from the end of his cigar.

"Before you became frightened by the matrimonial shipwrecks," added his friend.

The two men were seated in the smoking-room of the Club, lazily discussing all things in general and nothing in particular. Val Dinsmore was about Gerald's age, and a confirmed bachelor. A lover of sports, rich, jolly and good-looking, he had been the object of many an ambitious mother's

matchmaking designs, but he snapped his fingers at responsibilities and smiled humorously, as one by one his friends drifted into matrimony.

Gerald was the last to go, and Val studied him closely, pondering upon his chance remarks as if they had been freighted with grave meaning. Now as he supplemented Gerald's statement, he began to be interested. Was a confession forthcoming? If so he would not stave it off.

"The shipwrecks are more apt to frighten women than men. It is an element of danger that attracts us, it is an unknown experience. Shall we come out of it more fortunately than the others?"

"Self-analysis is the cancer of the age."

"You are right. We are not content to enjoy. We must scientifically solve the emotion that causes enjoyment. Is it physical or mental?"

"Pleasure at its height must be a combination of the two; just as a perfect man would be the highest development of the intellectual as well as the physical."

"Perfection is morality," added Gerald, "sin is imperfection; a blemish, whether it be upon a man's honor or upon a woman's face."

"Talking about women," interrupted Val, "your wife grows more beautiful day by day. I never saw a soul through its windows of flesh, as plainly as I see hers. You are a lucky fellow, Gerald. If one could be sure of a woman like Mrs. Townsend, one need not fear a matrimonial disaster. In these days, however, wedded life seems to be regarded as a phase through which most of us pass. No one considers it seriously. No one interprets the tie as binding, the amount of latitude allowed is illimitable, and the complications that arise are absurd. Take Nellie Truax for instance. She will proba-

bly marry young De Lancy, and come back to New York. Dicky will neither have the brains nor the delicacy to take himself off, and they will meet constantly. Two who have lived together in closest intimacy, meeting as comparative strangers, in this topsy-turvy world of ours. Again, take the man who will finally wed May Hastings. How soon would you predict his end?"

Gerald laughed. "May is as much opposed to wedded bliss as you are, Val, and as for the others, they are merely playing out their parts in the brief comedy of life."

"Comedy is twin sister to tragedy, and few can tell them apart."

Gerald did not answer. He was lost in his own thoughts. Of late he had accepted his altered position philosophically, and was drifting into the usual indifferent manner common to men of his stamp. He felt unequal to the demands Lucille constantly made upon him. His rôle of hero was daily becoming more difficult to play, and he regretted that he had helped to tie the bandage so tightly over his wife's eyes. Since she must lose her illusions some day, why should he put off the time of her awakening? Would it not be sadder for her in the end? Yet he knew himself thoroughly incapable of aiding in the process of turning her gold to dross, of uncovering the clay feet of her idol.

He had assumed a greater moral responsibility than he could maintain, but he dreaded the first hurt look in her eyes, when she should discover that she had been dreaming.

"If dreams were only truth, and could last!" he mused, "but sooner or later the day of awakening comes, when the fire of love is burned out, and only the ashes of despair are left."

He looked up suddenly, as a merry boyish voice broke in upon his reverie.

"The Kid!" said Val, in explanation.

Gerald nodded; and then Eliot Dinsmore joined them. He was a fair-haired, handsome young fellow, with wonderful hazel eyes shaded by long dark lashes. He dropped into a vacant chair beside the two older men, and touched a bell upon the table at his elbow.

"I'm nearly dead with thirst," he said, smiling, and showing his strong white teeth. "Will you fellows join me?"

"Where have you been, Kid?" asked Val, indulgently, as they sipped their brandy and soda. He was twelve years older than Eliot, and treated him more like a son than a brother.

"To a tea," he answered; "this is positively my last appearance at an afternoon crush. Saw your wife there, Townsend; she looked stunning."

"The Kid thinks your wife is just about right, Gerald. Better keep your eyes on him," and Val laughed, heartily, at his bit of banter.

"Thanks for the warning, old man, and as I promised to meet Mrs. Townsend at Mrs. Hastings', I think I had better be going."

Gerald rose, nodded to his friends and left the room.

"She's a stunner, there's no denying it," said Eliot sententiously.

"Don't lose your head, my boy. She isn't that kind of a woman."

"I know; that's why I admire her so much."

Eliot touched the bell again. Val lit a fresh cigar, and stared at his brother quizzically.

"Hard hit," he murmured. "Well, it's an experience we all have to go through. Lucky for him,

it's a woman like Mrs. Townsend. It might have been a Nelly Allaire or a Carol Stefani."

"What are you muttering about, Val? Did I hear you say Carol Stefani?" asked Eliot curiously.

"Perhaps I did. I was thinking of her."

"What was she like?"

"Like the serpent in the Garden of Eden."

"Really? She must have been fascinating."

"She was the antithesis of good, and as all wickedness is alluring, she was the acme of fascination."

"How curiously you speak of her! as if she were a plague."

"So she was, a plague few of us escaped."

"Were you one of the lucky ones?"

"I—Kid, the drinks are on me this time. What will you have?"

CHAPTER XIX.

This was Lucille's third season, and she still looked forward to the entertainment that it promised with unconcealed delight. She had long ago found her niche in society, and she occupied it with grace and dignity. She had fully borne out the prophecy of her youth, and had developed into one of those American women who are famous the wide world over.

Her slender figure had rounded out, and the shy undeveloped girl, with passionate eagerness in her face, had given way to the woman, whose calm contented eyes and serene brow told that all her expectations had been realized.

The first night of the opera, Lucille and her hus-

band were guests of Mrs. Hastings. The other occupants of the box were Eliot Dinsmore and a Russian prince. Gerald's pride was satisfied. Her sensitive face and easy poseful manner betokened her good breeding, and the jaded man of the world found no rough edges to jar upon him. He sat back of her now, admiring the poise of her head, the arrangement of her hair, the fit of her satin gown, all the details of which his practised eye so carefully noted.

From Lucille his eyes wandered to Isabel, and the older woman suffered by contrast. He was quite sure her hair kept its beautiful tint by artificial means, and he detected the rouge on her cheeks though put on by an artistic hand.

The curtain fell on the second act of "Faust," and Gerald rose to make a survey of the house.

"Do you know that Mme. Stefani is in New York, Gerald?" asked Isabel.

"Carol Stefani. Why, no; I thought she never intended to return."

"She is only here for a few months. She came over to see about some property. I believe she is to be Mrs. Osgood's guest to-night."

Lucille listened attentively. Carol Stefani! The name awoke memories long dormant. She was another of her husband's earlier loves.

"Who is Mme. Stefani?" she finally demanded. Gerald leaned over the back of her chair.

"A great many years ago, when you were still in the nursery," he began in a quizzical tone, "a southern girl made her first bow to New York society. Some people found her beautiful, others called her homely, but no one could deny a certain subtle charm, which she exercised over men and women, alike. She was poor but ambitious, her

father was a general, her mother died when the girl was born, and the cousin who invited her to spend a winter here, plainly informed her that she expected her to marry in her first season. This she did, but to every one's surprise she took for her husband an Italian count; a thoroughly unprincipled scoundrel, who made her life miserable for two years. Then she left him. He went back to Italy, and she remained in New York. At that time divorces were not in favor, and she had a hard struggle to regain her position. Just when she seemed assured of success, she suddenly threw up the game, and went to Paris, vowing she would never set foot in America again; and that, my dear, is a condensed history of the life of the erstwhile famous Mme. Stefani."

Isabel during this recital had listened half-heartedly to the Russian's love-making. She had been sorely upset at the news of Carol Stefani's arrival, and she wondered if her coming would in any way affect Gerald.

Lucille was puzzled. The mocking tones in which Gerald told his tale contradicted the story that she had heard of his devotion, and yet the first vague uneasiness she had experienced was still with her.

Eliot Dinsmore interrupted her reverie.

"There she is now," he said, "the woman in green, entering the Osgoods' box."

Lucille turned her head eagerly. The other woman chanced to be looking in her direction at the moment and their eyes met.

Carol Stefani might have been any age from twenty-five to forty. She was taller than the average woman and very slender, with long arms, and nervous hands that were never absolutely still. Her pallor, relieved only by the thin red line of her

lips, was startling. Her eyes under their heavy dark lashes were hazel in color and almond-shaped, while her hair was a glorious red. She wore it piled carelessly on top of her head, allowing loose ringlets to escape and curl on her forehead and around her ears.

Her beauty was so weird as to be almost repulsive to those who objected to the bizarre in nature; but long ago she had discovered her personal magnetism and she made the most of it. This, added to an alluring smile and a wonderfully sweet voice, made her dangerous as well as fascinating. She never lost her power over the men who had loved her, and she never forgave desertion.

During the next intermission Gerald met her in the corridor. She was leaning on young Osgood's arm but, as Gerald came up, she stopped and held out her hand.

CHAPTER XX.

When she had met Lucille's eyes earlier in the evening, she had turned carelessly to her host.

"Who is the pretty woman with Isabel Hastings?" she asked.

"O, the new beauty, Mrs. Gerald Townsend."

"So that is Gerald Townsend's wife. Who was she?"

"A mere nobody. Some country girl, I believe. It was a love match, they say."

Carol lapsed into silence. She recalled Gerald as she had known him, chivalrous, courteous, full of ambition. What had the years made of him? Had the poison of the age entered his veins and cor-

rupted him? She raised her opera-glass and took one long searching look at the face she had known so well. How she had played upon his emotions, finding him ever responsive to whatever chord she struck. She wondered if he had changed—if he had entirely outgrown her influence.

When they met, and he took her hand in his, she felt strangely moved.

"You have forced Time to stand still, Mme. Stefani," he said, admiration in every tone of his voice. He had been very responsive to this woman's charm in the days gone by, and he was forced to acknowledge that years had taken nothing from her.

"I have discovered the secret of eternal youth," she answered, mockingly, letting her eyes rest caressingly upon him. "And you I find improved by the touch of gray in your hair, and the lines around your mouth. What a pretty wife you have! I must congratulate you. Will you bring her to call upon me? I have rooms at the Astoria, and a cup of tea and a cigarette for my friends always. You will come soon, Mr. Townsend?"

Gerald promised politely. In fancy, he saw Carol Stefani lounging on a divan. The loose crêpe gown leaving her throat and arms bare, her feet in their fancy silk stockings and red-heeled slippers exposed, and between her teeth a cigarette, while the wittiest, wickedest cynicism slipped from those thin red lips. He had seen it all so often that the picture had lost none of its vividness, but he shook his head as he thought of Lucille being dragged into that circle of which Carol had been queen.

As for himself, he knew the woman; he had tasted of her power; and, besides, it was one of the oldest stories to him,

He was barely twenty-five when Mme. Stefani had dawned upon his vision, and he had given her a chivalrous devotion. He had tried so hard to champion her cause in her struggle for her lost position, and he had burned with eagerness to set her right in the eyes of the world.

She had accepted his devotion; had made him happy by smiles and tender words; had turned his head and fired his heart, only to laugh at his offers in the end, and to prefer her own path to his. In spite of his chagrin, she had managed to keep his regard, and in after years he had grown to admire her wonderful finesse.

After her return to Paris, he had heard of her frequently, as for a time she had been quite a leader in the American Colony there. Then some quarrel, which finally grew into a scandal, made her position intolerable, and she had travelled restlessly for several years. When she reached Paris again the past was forgotten, and though she did not try for leadership her position was assured. Her house became the rendezvous for budding celebrities and, a clever woman herself, she found no difficulty in attracting those with new ideas to exploit and those who had gained fame, outside of the beaten track. Her restless daring nature fitted her for the exciting game of French politics, but her lack of wealth prevented her taking too important a part. Nevertheless, she received warning from the government that her interference was unwelcome; and after that her plotting had to be done in secret. She was openly a Royalist and she wore constantly a medallion brooch, containing the portrait of the young Duc d'Orleans, set in diamonds and pearls. Perhaps her loyalty was more to the man than to the dynasty, but she was closely watched by the government and the knowl-

edge of this added fresh zest to a pursuit of which she had begun to tire. No one was more conscious of her shortcomings than was she herself, and she regretted bitterly her lack of stability.

When she found herself back in America, after an absence of fifteen years, she felt like an alien. Some of her compatriots she had seen frequently, for New York and Paris are closely connected; others she had heard of occasionally, and still others had dropped out of her remembrance.

Mrs. Osgood, her cousin, was prepared to acknowledge the relationship, but she was not willing to assume any responsibility, and so Carol found quarters at a hotel, instead of at her cousin's house, which had been her first intention.

Her utter unconventionality and her witty, merciless tongue antagonized most of the women, who had been willing to meet her in a friendly spirit, and she gradually found her circle of female acquaintance narrowing.

She was discussed, criticised, watched, and perhaps envied by those who were most bitter, but, in spite of all, she carried her head proudly, and defied her world audaciously, now, as in the past.

"Why do you fight them always?" asked Gerald curiously; and she laughed as she answered,

"What other interest have I in life? I like to raise the tiger in them. O we women, with our sharp claws decorously hidden 'neath velvet and lace! Can we draw blood, when we scratch? Who should know better than I? If I wound, do I not also carry scars myself?"

CHAPTER XXI.

LUCILLE was entertaining a small company of friends at dinner, to celebrate the announcement of Bess Reyling's engagement to Jack.

Bess, looking wonderfully pretty in the first colored gown she had worn since Bert's death, was blushing and dimpling with happiness, and Gerald teased her unmercifully.

There were but ten people at the table and the conversation was of necessity general. Lucille, who sat between Jack and Eliot Dinsmore, endeavored to divide her attention equally, but Eliot, who had lately begun to openly profess his admiration, tried to monopolize her. Gerald was telling a story and she was listening eagerly with the others, ignoring Eliot's efforts to draw her into a whispered tête-à-tête.

Her husband was still her adoration. She had learned much of the world in the last two years; had had the scales rudely torn from her eyes and had been forced to see, so often even against her will, that she clung all the more strenuously to her belief in the one man she adored.

Her faith in mankind had suffered many severe shocks, but while her confidence in him remained, she heeded little her general disillusionment. When he finished his story she laughed approvingly, with the rest.

"No one tells a story quite so well as Gerald," she said, turning to Jack, who she felt sure would agree with her. "When we were first married, he was like a book of fairy tales to me, and the impres-

sions of life I got at that time were all colored by his wonderful imagination."

"What are you saying about my wonderful imagination? My dear, it is really too bad to spoil a true story by such a suggestion!" Gerald put in.

"Who cares whether it is true or false as long as it is amusing," cried Bess, coming to the rescue.

"What a shocking lack of morals your words imply, Mrs. Reyling," answered Gerald, banteringly, after the general laugh had subsided. "Do you not know that truth is the foundation of all things?"

"Yes; but it is usually too much work to dig to the foundation. Most people prefer pottering around on top, and lies—being light and airy substances—are therefore the handiest."

By and by the talk drifted to Mme. Stefani, and the automobile she had had sent to her from Paris.

"Notoriety is the air she breathes and thrives in," said Eliot Dinsmore.

"She is a pioneer, and all pioneers have to suffer," retorted Gerald warmly. "They lead the way, and the world which reviles them is only too glad to follow in their footsteps."

"You are her champion?" inquired Eliot, with a slight sneer.

"Every true man is the champion of down-trodden woman. That is our rôle, and most of us do not find it unpleasant."

Gerald flushed as he answered. He understood Eliot's desire to quarrel; but he was powerless in his own house.

Eliot had met him twice at Mme. Stefani's. Both times he was leaving as the younger man entered, and the interchange of civilities had been coldly formal. Eliot was curious to see for himself what manner of a woman this Carol Stefani, whom his

brother had likened to a plague, could be, and he visited her frequently. Unfortunately he bored her, and as she could not forgive that, she showed the worst side of her nature to him. His lack of success he attributed to Gerald's influence, and therefore he began to hate him, and to pity Lucille.

Eliot Dinsmore was one of those men who believed that the evil passions in himself were common to all mankind. He jested at man's honor and woman's purity, alike. Lucille's serenity was to him a mask, which he hoped some day to remove. He did not love her, for such as he are incapable of love, but she fascinated him, and his interest in her had been sustained by the calm indifference she opposed to all his advances.

He thought if he could expose her husband to her in his true light that he might have more chance, and now, after he had provoked Gerald to an outspoken championship of Mme. Stefani, he turned to Lucille and whispered:

"I had no idea Gerald would take me up so warmly."

"And why shouldn't he?" asked Lucille coldly.

She had begun to distrust Eliot, though at first his big blue eyes and fair, drooping moustache, half hiding his weak, babyish mouth, had appealed to her.

"Do you know Mme. Stefani?" he asked.

"I have met her; but I can hardly claim to know her."

"And yet she is one of your husband's oldest friends."

"My husband's friends are my friends; only Mme. Stefani and I have not met frequently."

"You have never been to one of her Sunday afternoons?"

2829B

Sunday entertaining was one of the things Lucille could not reconcile herself to.

"No," she answered, frigidly.

"You ought to go. The crowd she assembles is really worth seeing. You would meet there all the Bohemian element to be found in New York, with plenty of bounders and a few curiosity-seekers, like your husband and myself." He spoke carelessly, wondering if Lucille knew that Gerald went there frequently. If not, she should no longer remain in ignorance of it.

Lucille paled slightly. This man was odious. What right had he to couple Mme. Stefani's name with Gerald's in that intimate fashion? The world was so cruel! Why could she not be left alone in her fool's paradise?

She looked across the table and met Gerald's anxious gaze. He had noticed the whispered colloquy and he wondered what mischief Eliot was up to.

When the women were alone in the drawing-room, Lucille sat down beside Bess. Bess was beaming over with happiness, and she began at once to speak of Jack.

"He is so true, Lucille," she said. "One feels instinctively that one can trust him. I have known him so long that his life is an open book to me, and there is not a page I am ashamed of." Lucille took Bess's hand in hers. Surely Bess did well to have confidence. Would life be worth living without it?

"You think you know him, Bess, but can one ever be sure of a man's heart?" she asked, sadly.

Bess looked up in astonishment.

"Can I believe my own ears?" she asked. "Is this Lucille Townsend who is speaking? What is wrong, dear? Why, I always imagined you knew the real meaning of love."

"And so I do. I was foolish, Bess. Something disturbed me. We women must hug our happiness close to our breasts; otherwise the demon Doubt will steal it from us."

"That doesn't sound like you, Lou. What do you know of doubt? Aren't you sure of Gerald?"

"O, yes; of course I am. What a question! If I lost my faith in him I should die. It is the world, and the littleness of most men, that has upset me." Lucille spoke quickly, but Bess was not satisfied. She read between the lines, and she saw that the first seed of distrust had been sown. Would it take root and blossom and bear fruit? Who could say? The seed falls in many places—on rocks, on barren soil and on ground carefully tilled and prepared for it. A woman's jealousy is a weed that grows overnight.

CHAPTER XXII.

One of the first fruits of jealousy is cunning.

"Why have you never taken me to call on Mme. Stefani?" demanded Lucille, the next morning, opening her attack from behind the coffee-urn. Gerald liked to see her at the head of the breakfast table, and she was seldom too tired to join him, at the cosiest meal of the day.

Gerald put his cup down before replying.

"It never occurred to me to do so," he answered. I thought you did not fancy her. She is a thorough Bohemian, you know."

"Perhaps; but you like her." Lucille emphasized the you, as if to express her willingness to take all his friends at his valuation,

"Yes. Because she is clever."

"And extraordinary? I remember you said once that you never cared for ordinary women."

"Did I? How well you remember all the little things I say," he said with a smile. "Don't judge me by them; for, you know, when the mood is on me I often talk at random."

Lucille, however, was not to be put off. She perceived that he was trying to draw the conversation into another channel, and she returned to the attack with renewed vigor.

"But you have not answered me, Gerald," she said complainingly.

"Your question was?"

"Why haven't you taken me to call on Mme. Stefani?"

"She receives on Sundays; that is one reason."

"It is insufficient. I find I must not be intolerant. She is half foreigner, and if she only receives on Sundays, then I must put my scruples in my pocket and go on her day. Shall we go to-morrow?"

She waited eagerly for his reply. He paused again, and then said coldly: "If you wish it, my dear."

The next afternoon, Lucille, gowned handsomely in gray, drove down to the Astoria. Gerald met her there, and they were shown upstairs at once. The rooms were dimly lighted and the strains of a mandolin mingled with the hum of conversation. Mme. Stefani came forward to welcome her guests.

"So good of you to come, Mrs. Townsend," she murmured. What had induced Gerald to bring his wife? and what should she do with her, now that she was here? These were unvoiced questions that hid behind her assumption of cordiality. After the usual exchange of commonplaces, she led Lucille to

a seat and seized upon a young and clever newspaper woman to entertain her.

Lucille's eyes took in every detail of the handsomely furnished rooms, where rich hangings, pictures and bric-à-brac were exhibited in lavish profusion. A French violinist was chatting volubly with an actress, more prominent for her escapades than for her art; while others whose appearance proclaimed them to be members of some artistic profession formed picturesque groups.

This was the first time Lucille had ever been in a mixed gathering. She had willingly followed in Mrs. Hastings' footsteps, and had set her face firmly against all unconventionality. She felt bewildered. Suddenly the voice of her neighbor interrupted her reverie. The woman was asking her a question:

"Is this your first visit here? You see we nearly all belong to some profession, and you don't look as if you do," she explained.

"Belong to a profession? O, no, but Mme. Stefani doesn't, either," she returned, detaching her thoughts from the curious assemblage around her, and concentrating them upon her companion. It was a pretty little trick of hers and contributed greatly towards her popularity—that of being all attention to the one in whose company she happened to be.

Finding a good listener, the young woman gave her caustic wit full play.

"Mme. Stefani belongs to the noble profession of patrons of art. She is rich enough to be disinterested and she lets us swarm here, on her days, and imagine we are in the swim. It is what we long for, you know; social recognition. That's what pays, nowadays, and we persuade ourselves we get it here, but to tell the truth, with the exception of a stray grande dame like yourself who stumbles in by

accident, we meet no one who can help us socially. There are plenty of men, but they do not ask us to visit their wives. As for Madame, what does she care about us, or our ambitions? She likes to hear us talk, or play, or watch us paint a picture, and we flatter her for her condescension, and that pleases her. She persuades herself that she does not miss the companionship of the women of her world. They have mostly dropped her, you know, and she does this out of revenge. She takes their husbands, whom she bribes with a dish of Bohemianism. Pshaw! It makes me sick to think of it!"

The woman stopped abruptly and Lucille gazed at her in astonishment. She was about twenty-five, with a shrewd, dark face. A woman fit to battle with the world for a livelihood, but showing the scars of many a fierce encounter.

"I do not understand," gasped Lucille, finally, feeling that her companion expected her to say something. A bitter mocking little smile flashed across the other's face.

"It is not to be expected that you should. The gulf between us is too wide. I thought I saw sympathy in your eyes and it led me to make my plaint, but I overlooked the fact that it could only be abstract sympathy."

"With whom am I to sympathize? with the outsiders who want to be recognized socially or with Mme. Stefani for being dropped by the women of her set?" returned Lucille, whose blood was roused by the woman's sneer.

"Of course with Madame. As for ourselves, our ambitions are utter nonsense. If we must starve, we should do so gracefully, then we should win approbation, but to fight and struggle for success, dear me, that is so vulgar!"

An underlying note of despair appealed to Lucille's generous nature.

"The only success that is worth winning is that which is battled for," she answered gently.

A page in Turkish costume came up to them, carrying a tray on which were coffee and cigarettes. Lucille took up one of the tiny Oriental cups.

"Don't you smoke?" asked the newspaper woman, as she helped herself to a cigarette and lit it at the candle on the tray.

"No."

"I beg pardon for asking. So many women do, nowadays, including our hostess."

Lucille looked around for Gerald. He was in the other room and she longed for him to take her out of this atmosphere. Then she caught sight of a familiar face, and she half rose in her eagerness to attract the attention of the tall blond man who had just entered. He saw her and came quickly towards the corner where she was seated. A gleam in his eyes, spoke of triumph. He had not dared to hope his words would bear fruit so quickly.

"This *is* a surprise, Mrs. Townsend," he said eagerly, taking her outstretched hand in his. The warm pressure of his fingers recalled her to herself, and she remembered that this man was directly responsible for her presence in such an uncomfortable position.

"Mr. Dinsmore," she interrupted hastily, "will you tell Gerald that I am going home now?"

"May I not escort you to your carriage?" he asked, throwing a world of tenderness into his eyes.

"Thank you, but my husband is here," answered Lucille with dignity.

When she and Gerald were rolling up Fifth Avenue in the brougham, her wrought-up feelings found

vent in words. She repeated to him most of the woman's conversation.

"And do you think those are nice people to meet?" she asked in conclusion.

"You would go, Lucille, in spite of all I said. You have had your way, and now, my dear, we will drop the subject."

"But you ought not to go there either, Gerald."

"I believe I am the best judge of that, Lucille," he answered quietly.

Lucille's eyes opened wide, and into them came an expression of terror. Was it true? Was Mme. Stefani really making war upon women by luring their husbands away, and was Gerald to be one of the victims?

It could not be true, and yet—— Two big tears welled up in her eyes, and rolled slowly down her cheeks. But Gerald did not notice them; he was looking out of the window.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THERE are two classes of women: those who awaken gracefully from their dreams of the impossible, and those who rebel against the truth. Lucille belonged to the latter class. Gerald was her idol, and she refused to see that he was only human.

Her lonely childhood and her reserved girlhood had both tended to develop the romantic side of her nature, and she viewed all things through rose-tinted glasses. The world to her was beautiful, for she was happy, and such unpleasant features as came perforce under her immediate vision scarcely touched the outer circle of her sympathies.

But the realities of life must be sooner or later faced by us all, and Lucille was no exception to the rule. Two years is a long time in which to enjoy absolute happiness, and yet to Lucille it seemed but a summer's day. The shadow that had come to mar her perfect content was still vague, but she regarded it with a certain undefinable terror. Whether she should admit the truth, acknowledge it as a necessary part of a woman's life and make no demur, was the question she asked herself again and again; and her answer was always the same. Such a course, for her, was impossible. Unless she were sure of him, sure as of herself, she could not bear it. He was her first and only love, he was everything to her, and she must be everything to him or nothing.

In this hour of her awakening to whom could she turn for comfort and advice? Bess was away on her wedding tour, and the only other woman to whom she could appeal was Mrs. Hastings. But she shrank from going to Isabel because, intuitively, she had divined her secret. As for her grandmother, she feared she would not understand. Mrs. Gaines's conception of duty was so simple and, in Gerald's world, simplicity was an unknown quantity. "Gerald's world!" . . . The phrase startled her. Had she learned, then, to separate herself from him in her thoughts? She had not been wont to anticipate trouble, but now she was miserable at the first approach of disillusionment.

O, to have been left alone in her paradise! Why had the jealous outside world intruded? If she had been foolish, at all events she had been happy, and now all happiness for her was ended. She wondered if Gerald realized that a shadow had sprung up between them. If she could only look into his heart and read the truth! It did not seem to her

possible that their dream of love could have come to so untimely an end. No, she would not believe it. Mme. Stefani was an old friend; she was a clever woman, and Gerald simply enjoyed her society. That was all; and yet——

She drew an armchair before the fireplace, and sat down weary with thinking.

Her reverie was interrupted by May Hastings, who, clad in the severest of black cloth tailor gowns, burst into the room like a cyclone. She was full of a new freak, and she came to ask Lucille's assistance.

"Belle won't let me have it at home," she explained, "so I came to you. Will you lend me your house for the evening? I promise you the affair shall be as decorous as possible, under the circumstances."

"I cannot imagine a party that you have anything to do with being decorous," answered Lucille, smiling, "but if Gerald is willing, I certainly have no objection."

"See here, Lucille; how much longer are you going to continue rolling yourself in the dust before Gerald Townsend?" May demanded. "He doesn't deserve it. He is only a man—a good-looking one, I admit; but after all what are men—even the best of them? Tyrants or fools. The tyrants make things warm for their womenkind, and the fools let their wives ride rough-shod over them. I wouldn't marry the best man living. I'd hate him if he turned out bad; and he'd bore me to death if he were too good. That is why I remain single. And then, what would Isabel do without me? Seriously, now, Lucille, why do you continue to let Gerald boss this show?" May asked the question in all kindness and good-nature. She was really fond of Lucille. She pitied her on account of her devotion

to her husband, of whom May herself did not have the highest opinion. She resented his treatment of Isabel, and she doubted Lucille's ability to keep him now that she had won him. So she gave her advice freely, and Lucille, who saw that it was well meant, checked her rising anger. She herself might condemn Gerald, but no one else should say a word against him.

"My dear May, I am old-fashioned enough to believe that a husband should be the head of the house, and as long as I live, I shall continue to defer to Gerald's opinion," she answered.

May raised her eyebrows and her lips emitted a low whistle.

"You're a chump, Lucille," she said, frankly, "but go on; be happy in your own way, I'll never say another word on the subject of women's rights. Will you kindly ask Gerald if I may have my party here on the fifth of February?" Then May rose to go. She had made her request and there was nothing more to be said.

After she had gone Lucille felt better. She had been roused to say something in Gerald's defence, and it had soothed her to thus exhibit her loyalty. After all he was a man, and he did not look at things as she did. Perhaps she did wrong to judge him, from her point of view, when she could not reach his.

That was the trouble. No matter how much a man and a woman loved, they could not see things in the same light. One must dictate the point of view to the other, and the dictator was usually the man.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"WHAT made you bring your wife here yesterday, Gerald?" demanded Mme. Stefani the next day, as Gerald dropped in on his way to the club. He was sure of finding her alone at this hour, and he had fallen into the habit of running in for a little chat almost daily.

Carol was lounging, as usual, on a divan. The China-crêpe gown which swathed her lithe figure displayed every movement of her supple limbs. Between her slender fingers was the inevitable cigarette.

"She wanted to come, and you know '*la femme qui veut*,'" he answered with a short laugh. He was visibly uneasy. He had no wish to discuss his wife with Carol. He owed this woman no account of his doings, and yet he felt obliged to offer some explanation of that which should have required none.

"She does not look that sort of a woman. Why did you marry, Gerald? I always thought of you as a free, unfettered spirit, like myself. I dreamed of meeting you again, and resuming the old sweet friendship, and see what the dream has come to! You call upon me with your wife. If it had been Isabel Hastings I should not have cared so much. I thought you two might marry when I learned that she was a widow. She is rich, sensible and would not have expected too much of a man of your temperament; but this mere girl, Gerald—she claims all."

"I beg of you, do not let us discuss my wife," he cried impatiently, rising and beginning to pace the floor. Was the world awry? Yesterday Lucille had inveighed bitterly against Mme. Stefani, criti-

cising and condemning her; and to-day Carol had begun an attack upon Lucille.

He had drifted unconsciously into this friendship with her, and it was only now when she assumed such an intimate tone with him, that he realized how far he had gone. It had been an unequal game from the start. Against this woman's magnetic power of fascination, the sweetness of which he had tasted years ago, he had opposed what he believed a perfect indifference. He realized her cleverness, and he enjoyed her pithy observations. The halo of romance, with which she enveloped herself was like a leaf out of the book of his youth, and it pleased him. He had had no fear that her old influence over him could possibly be resumed, and yet that was precisely what was coming to pass. Her long, yellow eyes compelled his; every movement of her slender graceful body stirred his passion as he watched with delight each gesture of her white, expressive hands.

Curiously enough, he did not consider that he was wronging his wife in any way, and he would have indignantly resented an assertion that he was robbing her of what was her due. It was not love that drew him to Carol. The charmer of his youth exercised the strongest sort of fascination for him, but to the wife of his middle age he gave the purest and best of all his affectionate devotion.

Though he recognized and classified the two passions that dominated him, he knew that the world at large would not accept such distinctions, and he doubted if Lucille herself would admit of them. The woman watched his restless movements and her red lips smiled, while her deep eyes glowed with resentment.

"Your wife!" she repeated bitterly, "God knows

I do not want to discuss her; no, nor think of her. That is a position I might have held but, *grâce à Dieu*, that I had the sense to see what was best for us both." Carol had lapsed into French, as she always did when laboring under strong excitement. "When you had grown tired of me—and you would have tired, for I believe no living woman could hold you always,—I would have gone mad with despair and killed you."

Her breath came in short gasps from between her moist red lips, and her nervous hands tore her lace handkerchief into shreds. She was an admirable actress, and she was playing her part to perfection. Perhaps a gleam of the old passion animated her, for she had been fond enough of Gerald in the old days.

Gerald paused in his walk and looked at her curiously.

"You are sanguinary to-day," he said cynically. He still doubted. Their relationship in the past had not induced confidence. Until to-day their friendship had been innocent enough, but though he realized they were both entering a new phase of experience, he made no effort to escape the moment that he saw approaching.

"Not more so than most women," she replied, —"women who love passionately, as I do."

"You would have killed me when I tired of you?" he repeated, slowly.

"Yes."

It was almost a whisper. The man was losing his head. He saw nothing but the long lithe form of the recumbent woman before him. Her eyes were fixed upon him hungrily, and under the spell of their witchery he forgot everything but the one consuming desire that swayed him. His wife; the

duty he owed to her; the love which should have been his safeguard--all were swallowed up in the flood of feeling this sorceress had called into being.

His pulses throbbed and a red mist swam before his eyes. His indifference vanished and his cynicism dropped from him like a mask.

"Carol!" he cried, dropping on his knees before her, and stretching out his arms. "You did love me, then."

"No, not then," she answered as she leaned towards him, "not then, my king, but now."

CHAPTER XXV.

She surrendered herself to his embrace, and he held her close; but with the first touch of her bare white arms upon his neck, he awoke to a realization of his perfidy with a shock of dismay.

Gently he disengaged himself from her, and rose to his feet with a curious, hard little laugh.

"Truly, *m'aime*," he cried, his voice still unsteady, "you are a wonderful actress. I was very nearly deceived into believing the whole thing was true."

She lay back against the pillows, watching him defiantly.

"Why do you still doubt?" she demanded.

He laughed again. "You taught me to do so, long ago," he said, "and for the life of me, I cannot get over it. Fancy, the absurdity of your loving me now! *M'aime*, we have done with such farces, you and I. Love belongs in the category of youth. How well you acted it, Carol! I repeat, for one moment I almost believed you."

"You shall believe me! I say it again, Gerald, I love you. I have always loved you. I lied to you in those old days. You were the breath of my body, the light of my eyes; but I was wilful; I would not give in, and you did not understand your power. You could have done with me as you wished, Gerald."

She had risen from the divan, and now she came up to him and laid one hand caressingly upon his arm. He turned and faced her. A gleam of amusement was still in his eyes, but her face was white and drawn with passion. He fancied it was baffled rage, and he was tempted to mock her, but his more generous nature came to the rescue.

"What good does it do to recall the past, Carol?" he asked. "It is so unutterably behind us. As for the present, I have forgotten it," he added, courteously.

"And what becomes of me, if you forget?"

"I cannot believe that I am of so great account to you. There is always so much to occupy a woman of the world. You will return to Paris, and hatch plots for the restoration of a French monarchy."

"And you? You will go back to the serious-faced child, and play at being a model husband."

"I shall do my best."

"And for how long? Bah! will she not find out how hollow you are, and turn to a younger man for sympathy? Then what will you do?"

"There is no danger," he answered, confidently. "Even if Lucille should come to see me as I am, she is too true a woman to seek consolation elsewhere."

"It may be forced upon her. That young fool Dinsmore is mad about her, and he will stop at nothing to win her."

"You cannot rouse my jealousy, Carol. She is my wife, and she is the purest and best of women. There, let us part friends at least. When did you say you leave for Paris?"

"Perhaps next week—now that I have nothing more to stay for." Her voice had grown sad, and her great eyes were raised to his beseechingly, as if craving pardon.

"Let me wish you *bon voyage!* And now, good-bye! I shall always think of you tenderly, Carol. I shall always remember you as the dear woman you once were to me."

He held out his hand frankly. He was going to end another chapter in his life, and he felt relieved to think it could close so calmly. He said to himself he was too old for violent emotion, and he was too wise to be fooled by Carol's superb acting. She would pass out of his life, and he would go back to Lucille content. So he held out his hand to her, but she did not take it. Before he could guess her intention, she flung herself sobbing upon his breast.

"Kiss me!" she begged, imploringly, "just once for the sake of the past."

One long kiss he gave her, and then he put her gently from him.

When he had gone, she sprang up quickly and stood before the mirror.

"Am I grown old or ugly, or is he turned Puritan?" she asked herself. "Fool that he is to think I ever loved him! And how foolish to think that he has done with me so easily! I shall go away. I have played my hand and lost, but before I go I shall leave him a small souvenir. Think of me tenderly, Gerald! Oh, I warrant you shall think of me! I shall take good care of that!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

Upon leaving the Waldorf, Gerald walked down the Avenue to his Club, where he sought the corner that Val Dinsmore had appropriated as his own. Val was not there, however; it was too early for him, and Gerald, seating himself in one of the great leather chairs, lighted a cigarette. He could not easily banish the memory of the scene in which he had just been an actor. He wondered how much of Carol's emotion had been feigned, and how much real. If she could hold herself in check in the past, surely she need not have given way now, when they both were so much older. As for her confession of love, he did not believe it. The first time he had seen her in Paris, after she had taken up her residence abroad, she had treated him as an old friend, but not as a lover. He had hoped for some sign of relenting on her part then. He had tried to plead his case, for the glamour was still upon him, but she had refused to listen to him. Could he then believe that she had cared for him all these years? As a woman she had simply tested her power over him. She was a very wonderful creature, he thought, seeing that she was close on to forty and looked scarcely twenty-five.

Poor Carol! He felt inclined to pity her. After this they would probably not meet again for years; but he would always remember her kindly. Yes, he had promised her that, and he would keep his promise.

His mind went rummaging back into the past and delved into the period of their earlier friendship. Even at twenty-five Gerald Townsend was

inclined to drift; and it had not been difficult for him to surrender himself entirely to a woman like Carol. Although he had spoken of himself to Lucille as one who had not known a careless boyhood, he had been left singularly free to act as he would. Perhaps it was this very freedom that made him old, wise beyond his years and dissatisfied with life, before he really knew what life meant. Tired of the endless struggle that he perceived was being waged around him, he early adopted the philosophy that nothing mattered. Emotion was a thing to be choked at birth. The sooner he cultivated indifference, the sooner would he be freed from the thousand vexatious little worries of daily life. And when he met Carol, he believed he had perfected his philosophy. She seemed, at first, the living exponent of his ideas. She mocked at men and at morals, believing in one as little as she did in the other.

"Some men are born good, as others are born stupid; one is as little to a man's credit as the other to his discredit. Only you were not born good, Gerald," she had said to him, with her usual audacity. He listened to her eagerly; pondered over her observations, and stored up her aphorisms for future guidance.

"As long as vice is a sugar-coated pill, so long will we moderns swallow it gracefully," she used to say. "After the sugar is dissolved, and the bitter medicine bites our tongues, we see how loathsome it is," and then she would laugh grimly, as if she knew whereof she spoke.

"We must buy our experience as we buy our clothes," she told him. "Ready-made experience is as vulgar as ready-made clothing. You would think as little of using the one as the other."

In those days he agreed with her on all subjects. She was about his age, but she was a woman and had been married; and to the man of twenty-five she was a fountain-head of wisdom. His own little efforts at cynicism paled beside hers, but she steeped him so deep in the poisonous atmosphere with which she was surrounded that he never fully recovered from its effects.

He had drifted away from Isabel's ennobling influence, and had given himself up to the poppy-scented dreams that clung to Carol; and, while the dream lasted, he had been content. Then came his hour of awakening. It comes to all of us, and most of us, like Gerald, find our philosophy of little avail in the face of great human pain.

His book, which had meant so much to him,—for in it he had embodied her theories and his,—linked their minds together in a union which he intended should appeal to her. And she had laughed at it. With her innate shrewdness she had discovered his clumsy subterfuge, and, as she glanced from the printed page to the living story in his eyes, she had given way to a mirth that pained him cruelly.

Blows like these, however, do not kill, but the small remnant of faith that he still cherished shrivelled up under the scorching heat of her ridicule.

Then Carol had gone to Europe, and had forbidden him to follow her. He was still at the age when a man obeys a woman's commands, and he had stayed away as she bade him, until the fierce longing to see her had caused him to throw aside all vestige of obedience. He loved her—that was to be his excuse—but when they met, and she greeted him as an old friend, his heart sank.

He had gone away, cured, as he fondly imagined, and had tried to hide himself from the haunts of

men. Anywhere out of the beaten track. He was savage in his desire for loneliness; and, in travel and solitude, his philosophy assumed material shape.

"Nothing matters!" he said to himself, as he lay in his tent, and looked up into the starry heavens. "If I cannot have Carol, there are others,"—and then he checked a sigh, trying in vain to convince himself that another woman could take her place.

He returned to New York, and resumed his life there. He was only thirty, but in his heart he felt more like seventy. It seemed to him as if his three score years and ten were drawing to an end.

Isabel was a widow, and she had welcomed him as if there were no secret gulf between them; but he could not go back to her. All emotion in him seemed dead. As his unbelief grew, his outward courtesy deepened. Isabel looked into his eyes and marvelled, but she could not look into his heart. Secretly she cherished the desire to win him back as her lover, but the years passed, and he remained only her friend. It was the continuance of that calm even friendship which at the last made her heartsick and weary. Then he had met Lucille, and had felt a vague interest in her as an experimental specimen of girlhood. His unbelief mocked at her faith and her innocence, but the clear light in her eyes burned steadily. He had tested her by the old forms he knew so well, but she had stood the test bravely. Then, with a throb of anger, he realized that emotion, long dormant, was stirring in his breast. He would fight it down. After all these years of suffering, when he had finally won peace, was he to give in to the invader again? He had believed himself to be proof against the allurements of sex, and a girl had made light of his armor

of indifference and had vanquished him, until he lay at her feet, crying for love like any mere schoolboy.

Then he had felt safe in the luxuriance of his final passion. His wife was to him the embodiment of all the virtues; but, manlike, he had tired of virtue, and Carol, flashing across his path again just at the fatal hour when he began to realize that his dream of happiness was fading, had once more stirred him into unrest.

Into the meshes of her golden sorcery he had drifted idly, assuring himself that he was merely playing on the outer edges of temptation, and that he had no intention of venturing into the depths. And then, suddenly, his good resolutions had fallen in ruins like a house of cards.

There was no outer edge to this temptation. It was a magnet that drew him to the heart of vice, and his negative virtues had no strength to hold him back. Only at the touch of her arms did he succeed in shaking off the moral lethargy into which he had sunk; and then he had left her, too upset to realize what he had done; to what he had committed himself.

Was Carol playing with him, or had they both scorched themselves in the hot flame of passion? Thank God, it had been a mere scorching, not a reduction of their moral selves to ashes!

Well, now that he was out of it he would keep out. He would return to his duty and to his wife. But what would become of her? She had no one to return to. No anchor to keep her from shipwreck.

A man can always go back, but for a woman there is no side-path that leads to respectability.

CHAPTER XXVII.

If one could bear alone all the consequences of a wrong action, sin would not assume such a terrifying aspect. It is the wide-reaching consequences of even the smallest slip from the path of rectitude that deters one, or causes regret, when it is too late for all else. In this unhappy state was Gerald Townsend. He wanted to be alone and think it all out clearly, and yet he dreaded the moral accusation he knew he must face.

He started nervously as the sound of Val Dinsmore's voice fell upon his ears.

"That you, Gerald? What brings you here so early?" he asked, depositing himself in an adjacent armchair, and pressing the electric button for a waiter.

"I just dropped in for a quiet smoke," answered Gerald, uneasily. Val's eyes twinkled; he was on the scent of a mystery. He had heard of Gerald's renewed devotion to Mme. Stefani. Rumors of it were current in boudoir and club, and yet few knew that these rumors emanated from Carol herself, and were a part of her deep-laid plan to make Gerald uncomfortable.

"What'll you have, Gerald?" asked Val, as the waiter approached.

"If you will excuse me to-day, Val— I—I have a headache."

"Nonsense old man, have a whiskey and a soda. It'll do your head good."

"I think not. Do not insist. I really must decline."

Val shrugged his shoulders, good-humoredly, and gave his own order.

"What's up, old chap? You look seedy."

"I feel seedy, Val. The fact is I've been making a fool of myself—trying to remake men and women into puppets of my own construction, so that I could pull the strings and see them dance; and they have turned the tables and are making me dance instead; that is all." Gerald shot the words out from between his teeth, as if they were mockers at his own folly.

Val looked perturbed. "O, you exaggerate," he said soothingly. He wondered how far it had gone.

"I suppose I do; but I am in an uncomfortable position with the door barred to escape, and few of us like to face the consequences of our idiocy."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"It is worse than you can imagine. I had great treasure given to me to guard, and I allowed myself to be beguiled into exchanging it for a gold brick. I have been the dupe of my own folly, and I have no one to blame but myself. That is what makes it so hard, Val. If I could swear at some one else, I could bear it better; but swearing at oneself is cold comfort, and so I can do nothing, but sit and wait and play a woman's part instead of a man's, when every fibre in me longs for action. It makes me sick to think of it! There, Val, I feel better; some of my ill-humor has evaporated in talk. I'll change my mind if I may. What are you drinking? I think I'll order the same," and Gerald, with an effort, put his gloomy thoughts away, and discussed the topics of the day with his friend.

Val noticed the transition, but still felt far from satisfied. He would have preferred to hear Gerald speak openly, yet the fantastic language in which

he was wont to veil his true meaning only partially misled Val.

"This," thought he, "is another case of moral shipwreck," and he mentally patted himself on the back for his cleverness in steering clear of matrimony.

"'When a man's married his troubles begin,'" he quoted, with zest; "but no matter how much trouble a single man may have, it never equals the double woes of a Benedict."

That Carol was at the bottom of it he felt certain, for of old he knew that she was one of those women who invariably bring mischief in their train. From Eliot, who was inclined to gossip about the affairs of others, though he was unusually secretive about his own, Val had heard the murmurings of an approaching storm. Others had heard it, too, and Isabel's face wore a troubled look usually quite foreign to it.

This very afternoon, which had been so charged with excitement for Gerald, she went to seek out Lucille, and learn how much the young wife knew; but Lucille knew nothing.

The persons most interested are usually the last to hear the truth, and while their world was palpitating with the new scandal, Gerald was unconscious that his devotion to Carol had been noticed, and Lucille had no idea that the vague suspicion which was troubling her was accounted a fact by his friends and hers.

Isabel found her alone. She was seated in a low chair before the open grate, which was blazing merrily. The room, with its pink and white hangings, its dainty dressing table framed in swiss and lace, its low, white chairs, with pink cushions, and its white and gold framed pictures, seemed a veri-

table dream of purity; and Isabel sighed to think that the serpent could find entrance into such a paradise of innocence.

Lucille rose wearily to greet her visitor. She was low-spirited, and her young faith was quivering with the shock of this first blow.

"It is so good of you to come to me to-day, dear Mrs. Hastings," she said, trying to be grateful for Isabel's kindness; "it is so wretched out that I indulged in the luxury of remaining indoors."

"You are more fortunate than I," returned Isabel, with a bright smile. "I was literally put out, as May is having a few friends to rehearse for the nonsense party."

"How happy May is! She seems to retain her capacity for enjoyment so long;" and Lucille sighed.

"That is an attribute of youth, and yet to me it is a capacity for sorrow and not for joy that marks the depth of a woman's character."

"I fancy most of us would sacrifice depth of character for a continuation of happiness," Lucille returned. "Why must we all be tried in the furnace of adversity?"

"I don't know, dear. It is life. Nothing endures in this world. Everything is subject to change, and perhaps a constant diet of contentment would be as injurious for our characters as a constant diet of sweets would be for our physical health."

"Have you kept your faith, Mrs. Hastings?" asked the young wife abruptly.

"In God, my dear?"

"No, in man?"

"I hope so, Lucille, faith is——"

"A matter of temperament," interrupted Lucille, impatiently, "that is what Gerald would say, but that is not all?"

"I was not going to quote Gerald to you. I was going to speak from my own experience. Do you care to hear a chapter from a life so uneventful as mine has been?"

"You are sure you don't mind?" Lucille asked. She felt as if it would be almost profanation to tear the veil aside from a secret so deep and so holy as that which she knew Isabel cherished.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ISABEL smiled sadly, and shook her head. It would not hurt her now to uncover the past.

"I was not much older than you are, Lucille, when my husband died, and I was left to face the world, alone," she began. "I had been so full of ambition as a girl, that it did not surprise many of my friends when I married Mr. Hastings. True, he was nearly twice my age, and May was a growing girl who would soon be a serious consideration to me, but he was one of the noblest men I have ever known. There was no deceit on either side. He knew I did not love him, but we were unusually good friends; and my faith in him lasted until the end. His death made a great change in my prospects, and O, how often have I longed for his advice since! I mourned him truly, as a dear good friend who had never failed me. I knew that he loved me, but his best and deepest love had been given to his first wife, and I was more a head for the household and a companion for May than an object of adoration. And of May, how can I speak? You know her, Lucille—a wild tomboy, who has caused me much uneasiness, but who is true as

steel, in spite of it all. I never really fear for her. I thought it would be easy to speak of my life, Lucille, but I find it is very difficult.

"You ask if I have kept my faith in man, and I know there must be some crisis in your own life to make you anxious for my answer. Yes, dear. I have kept my faith. In spite of many a rebuff, it will not die. There is evil in the world, but there is always good to counter-balance it; there is evil in men and women, but, if you search, you will always find the good in them also."

"Why is it evil is always so apparent, while you have to search for the good?" interposed Lucille.

"Is it? I had not noticed that."

"And you have always found more good than evil in men?"

"If I had not, I could not have kept my faith. Believe me, Lucille, that a woman cannot have too much confidence. That is what makes life possible for her. If she doubts, she is lost; lost in an unfathomable sea of suspicion, which leads to despair. Do you understand?"

Lucille nodded, and over Isabel's face stole an expression of perfect tranquillity.

She had conquered, and her words would bear fruit. Though she had not dared to speak Gerald's name, still Lucille must understand the whole conversation had referred to him, and she would thus be deterred from judging hastily.

Silence intervened, and Isabel forebore to break it. Lucille sat thinking deeply. Isabel had come to her, to plead for him. What had he done that he should need an intercessor with his own wife? Isabel was arguing that she should keep her faith in him, even as Isabel had kept it. Why was it necessary to strengthen her faith? She had not

doubted until now. A vague suspicion had been troubling her—a suspicion that she might be failing in her ability to hold him fast—but it had been no more than that. She was jealous of Mme. Stefani, but only in a general way, on account of their old friendship in the days when she, Lucille, had not known him; but that there was any real cause for alarm had not entered into her thoughts until Isabel put it there.

She could not be grateful for Isabel's interference, and she resented the fact that the other woman had seen that which had escaped her eyes. Her pride protested against the thought that Isabel pitied her. Gerald Townsend's wife should not be in need of pity. No, she would face his accusers, his defenders, with the same plea. She was satisfied. No matter what it might cost her, the world should not say that he had tired of her, and she was breaking her heart over it.

So this silence, which brought peace to Isabel and a consciousness of having done more than her duty, brought the first real inquietude to the young wife.

. . . . . .

They were dining at home that evening, and Gerald's manner had never been more impressive. His eyes followed Lucille admiringly, as if he never tired of watching her; and she, full of her new plan, excelled herself in her efforts to please. She wore a gown that he approved of, and she talked with an eagerness that might have betrayed her nervousness, had he been able to concentrate his attention upon her, as he did his eyes. Ordinarily, she would have thought him merely in one of his old delightful moods but, after Isabel's defence, she sus-

pected that his animation was as forced as her own.

Later on they went out, and she scarcely saw him again until it was time to return home.

After she was in bed she could not sleep. The torturing suspicions of the day came back with renewed force. Could her happiness be over? It had lasted such a short time. Surely God would not take Gerald's love from her, and leave her nothing!

She appeared at the breakfast table, pale and heavy-eyed.

"Are you not well, Lucille?" asked Gerald, tenderly. His heart smote him at the sight of her sad face.

"Yes, but I did not sleep well, and I am tired this morning," she answered, wearily.

"Take care of yourself, dear. Stay at home and rest to-day." But Lucille shook her head. There would be no rest for her until she knew the truth. Nevertheless, she felt unequal to the task of meeting her friends carelessly, and as, after the opera, she was going to a large dance that night, she spent the afternoon on a couch in her boudoir.

"I am not at home to any one, Hortense," she said.

"Very well, madame," and the maid darkened the room and left Lucille alone with her thoughts.

Presently there was a knock at the door, and Hortense entered.

"A note by messenger for madame," she said.

Lucille took it languidly, and studied the envelope. The handwriting was unfamiliar to her, but she broke the seal without any thrill of interest. A sharp cry broke from her lips as she read the opening sentence, and she snatched up the envelope nervously and re-examined it. It was cer-

tainly addressed to Mrs. Gerald Townsend, but it was undoubtedly meant for Gerald, and it was from that woman.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SHOULD she read it, or should she not? With trembling hands she laid it aside, and then, yielding to an irresistible impulse, she picked it up again and read it through.

MON AMI:—Surely we cannot part like this? In what have I offended you? By telling the truth? Ah, mon Gerald, it is there in your heart and in mine. Why should we keep up the pretence of not admitting it any longer? You will come to me. I can depend upon you now, as always,

CAROL.

Lucille was conscious of a sharp sickening pain at the heart, as the letter slipped from her nerveless fingers. She had wanted to know the truth; she had asked for proofs of her suspicions, and Fate had heard her prayer. Surely, she thought, no woman had ever been so cruelly deceived before. Gerald had been her idol; and this was God's punishment. She tried to find some loophole of escape; to conjure up some explanation; to imagine some excuse—but the damning evidence of the letter hemmed her in on all sides. It spoke condemnation in every line, and all that she had ever heard of Mme. Stefani came back to her in this hour with redoubled emphasis. She remembered the stories of her strange fascination—her undying power over men who had once submitted to her yoke—and a fierce hatred sprang up in her heart against this usurper of her happiness. She rebelled against the

horrible injustice of life. Were we, she asked herself, put into the world simply to be tortured? Were we given flesh, merely that we might crucify it? Now that she was disillusionized, would she be able to console herself, as Gerald had suggested in the first days of their acquaintance? Now, that he had taken away her faith, would the philosophy he preached supply its place? She was suffering a mental pain so keen that its anguish became physical. No tears came to her relief, but her slight frame was shaken by dry, shuddering sobs. It was like the death of her first-born, and as that thought came to her, she thanked God she had no child to share her heritage of sorrow.

Eventually she grew calmer with a calm born of despair, but the marks of this hour would be with her until her death. Wounds heal, but they leave their unmistakable scars. And the wound in Lucille's heart must bleed for years.

She rose from the floor on which she had thrown herself in her first agony, and went to her desk. She could not think clearly as yet, but she must determine quickly upon some line of action. He had promised to come home early. He might arrive at any minute.

Her first impulse had been to leave him—to carry her broken heart back to Avondale—but her pride, which had lain dormant for years, came to her aid. No, she would not abandon her position. She would stay; she would face it out; she would defy Mme. Stefani; should it be necessary, she would even defy Gerald, and the cruel world should not gloat over her failure. Out of the ashes of Trust's funeral pyre she would raise a monument of Triumph. She would never know happiness again, and her love-dream was over, but she would show the world that

a woman can live, and be of service, though her heart be dead.

. . . . . .

When Gerald came home Hortense told him that madame had gone out.

"But she left a note for monsieur," and the maid handed him a letter which had cost Lucille a great effort to write. As he went into the library to read it, he felt that some momentous crisis was approaching, but he little expected the thunderbolt that was in waiting.

As he tore open the envelope, Carol's note fell to the floor; and then a suspicion of the truth flashed across him. He read Lucille's letter hastily.

I opened the enclosed note as it was addressed to me, by mistake, and I read it through, even after I learned it was meant for you. Its contents justified me, I think. Do not try to explain! It will only make matters worse, for just at present I am suffering more than I ever dreamed was possible.

I am dining out, and afterwards I shall go to Mrs. Lord's dance, but I do not wish to see you until to-morrow. Then perhaps I shall have determined upon a course of action. I shall not leave your house, as any thought of scandal is abhorrent to me, but all the details can be decided upon later.

Gerald, my husband, I am heart-broken.

LUCILLE.

Gerald's face grew stern and set as he read; but, when he reached the ending, a mist swam before his eyes. He picked up Carol's note and some glimmer of the truth burst upon him. The envelope was plainly addressed to "Mrs. Gerald Townsend"; the note had been sent to the house instead of to the club, where she had written him once or twice before; and then the unmistakable meaning of the contents. All of which told him that Carol had taken this means of wreaking her vengeance. Yes, it was quite clear now. Even yesterday, fresh from

the glamour of her magnetic personality he had doubted the sincerity of her passion, but to-day she gave him proof conclusive of her diabolical mockery.

He had meant to make up to Lucille the wrong he had done her, but now Fate, in the guise of a woman repulsed, had dealt him a blow from which he realized it would be most difficult to recover.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Don't ask me any questions, dear Mrs. Hastings, but I've come to dine with you to-night," said Lucille, and Isabel acquiesced, without a word of protest.

Lucille knew that if she wanted to make a good fight, she must provide herself with a strong ally, and Isabel, being Gerald's friend, was the strongest one she could bring to mind. She felt now that Isabel had meant to be kind to her on the previous day, and if so she would give her an opportunity to prove her friendliness. May was not at home, and Lucille was thankful that she was spared the girl's keen scrutiny. The dinner was rather a sombre affair. Lucille was too troubled to be fully at ease, and Isabel dared not broach the only topic she knew would be of interest.

Afterwards, in the shadow of Isabel's box at the Opera House, Lucille fought for her self-possession and won. She had never looked lovelier. All Hortense's skill had been called into requisition, and the French woman took special delight in decking her mistress for the social fray.

As the two women, escorted by a Russian prince, entered the ball-room, Isabel marvelled that Lucille

could have learned to wear a mask so soon. She watched her greet the men who gathered admiringly about her, and remarked that never before had this woman courted attention as she was courting it to-night.

"Poor child!" thought Isabel, "what has she heard? what does she know?"

Eliot Dinsmore, who had assumed an air of intimacy ever since the meeting at Mme. Stefani's, bore Lucille away from the group that surrounded her, and, placing his arm about her waist, led her out among the dancers. She had never looked lovelier, and her new purpose made her appear kinder to the man who was already regarding her with a lover-like fondness. As they glided through the waltz, he whispered her little compliments the meaning of which she did not perceive, so busy was she with the ever-present thought of her own sorrow.

She danced with him again and again, until the row of dowagers raised their brows significantly. And yet she was totally unconscious of the effect she was producing. He, on the other hand, buoyed up by new hopes, exaggerated the tenderness of his manner.

"Aren't you tired?" he whispered, "you are so pale; let us rest awhile in the conservatory," and he led her away to where the incandescent lights in their pale green globes, the murmuring fountain, and the echo of the distant music combined to soothe in a measure the turbulence of her overwrought nerves.

She sank wearily into a low seat, and rested her head upon her hand. Eliot Dinsmore watched her ravenously. Mad with passion, he was trying to frame an expression of his adoration in phrases suf-

ficiently delicate not to offend. He knew that one false step, one inopportune word, would cost him the position he had scarcely won. Since their first meeting she had attracted him strongly, but until lately she had appeared unconscious of his devotion. To-night, however, left him no doubt of her attitude towards him, and yet, though he had brought her into the conservatory with the fixed determination to make his declaration, he who was usually so eloquent could find no words with which to address her.

She seemed absorbed in thought, and he leaned forward to get a better view of her face. In doing so he noted with something of a shock of surprise that her mouth was drawn with pain. He had admired her in her buoyant happiness, but now every sympathy was aroused for her evident distress. Gradually the lover in him lost ascendency, and the nobler part of his manhood rose to the surface.

"Mrs. Townsend, forgive me," he pleaded, "but I cannot help seeing that you are unhappy," and then, as she turned her face towards him and he saw the dumb agony of her eyes, she held out her hand to him and he raised it reverently to his lips.

"And I thought I was hiding it so beautifully," she said, with a little smile that was sadder than tears. They sat side by side in silence, she grateful for the sympathy his manner displayed and he half-amused, half-annoyed, at the end of his vain delusion.

He realized now that she had accepted his devotion merely as a cloak to cover her own misery, and yet he felt no bitterness towards her. He saw that she was one of those women who value themselves so highly that they never dream men can approach them with unworthy thoughts. Her own innocence

of heart was her best safeguard, as Gerald had said it would be, and Eliot Dinsmore was forced to confess that this was a woman upon whom his fascinations had no effect.

"Now I am ready to go back to the ball-room," Lucille presently announced. "Have I banished all traces of grief from my face?" She looked him squarely in the eyes, and smiled bravely, while he scrutinized her closely and saw how utterly unconscious she was of the purpose he had in bringing her here. With a little sigh he admitted his complete defeat, and after gravely assuring her that she looked perfectly, if not indeed blissfully, happy, he offered her his arm and they rejoined the dancers.

Mrs. Hastings frowned slightly as she saw them. She could not understand why Lucille was openly encouraging Eliot. She knew the young wife too well to think it might be from motives of revenge, and she finally came to the conclusion that it was done unconsciously.

It was quite late when Gerald made his appearance. He came at once to Isabel.

"Lucille has not taken me into her confidence," she said to him, "but I think I can make a very good guess at the trouble between you. O Gerald, are you going to let that woman spoil your life a second time?"

He did not answer. Both were thinking of the past. He and Isabel were young again; it was her first season, and he, the friend of her youth, was the favored one of her admirers. Both were thinking of this time now, and Isabel, with a woman's heroism, referred to it, in spite of the pain it gave her. Mrs. Hastings, the rich and courted widow of the famous banker, and Gerald Townsend, the man about town, could still be friends, but in all the

years that had passed neither until now had referred to the woman who had parted them.

Isabel felt that his happiness was again at stake, and she determined that it should not be sacrificed this time for want of a friendly warning. She spoke in a spirit of friendship, not sparing herself nor him. Thus she cast aside the veil of false delicacy and brought home to him the fact that she too had suffered in the days gone by. Now that her tongue was loosened she gave it free rein, while the man beside her listened and wondered. In that hour, when he realized what this woman had suffered, he was ashamed. Coming as it did after the revelation of the utter selfishness of Carol Stefani, the impression it made was doubly strong.

"I could not speak for myself," concluded Isabel, with swimming eyes, "but I can speak for Lucille. She is the loveliest woman here to-night, and the most unhappy."

CHAPTER XXXI.

LUCILLE, coming up a few minutes later, caught sight of her husband, and, in spite of her efforts to maintain her composure, the hand that rested on her partner's arm trembled.

"When did you come, Gerald?" she asked carelessly.

"I have just arrived," he answered, "are you tired? Do you want to go?"

"O dear no, I am having a glorious time," and then, turning away, she threw Isabel a glance that was full of meaning.

It was very late when she consented to have her carriage called and she and Isabel and Gerald drove

homeward. Up to the moment when they dropped Mrs. Hastings she was gaiety itself, but, immediately she and Gerald were alone she relapsed into a most depressing silence. On reaching their house, she ran quickly up the steps, disdaining her husband's proffered arm, and entered hurriedly. He followed her, but paused as he reached the door of her room.

"Lucille, listen to me, I beg of you!" he pleaded, laying a detaining hand on her shoulder.

"I cannot to-night, Gerald. Don't try to explain. I could not bear it to-night," she answered in a calm, passionless voice.

"Just one word. I have been a fool, Lucille, and I ask your pardon; but I have not wronged you, as you think; I swear it," he began, hurriedly, but Lucille refused to listen and shook herself free from his touch. "Not another word!" she cried, with something of anger in her voice, "I implore you not to address me." And then she entered her room, and closed the door.

Gerald realized that his position was an absurd one; and yet she was evidently vexed so that he feared to intrude upon her. He had ignored her request, and had gone to the dance, preferring to arouse her resentment rather than not know what he was to expect; and this was the result—she refused, to listen to him.

Isabel's counsel, however, made him patient, and his own sense of justice bade him wait and make peace upon her terms and not his own. Still he lingered outside her closed door hoping that she would relent. If he could once take her in his arms, he would force her to listen, force her to forgive, but with the wooden barrier between them he was powerless.

How long he had waited he could not tell, when sudenly the sound of a body falling heavily, aroused him sharply from a reverie.

"My God!" he cried, throwing open the door, and rushing into the room. Lucille was lying on the floor, her eyes closed, and apparently unconscious. Hortense entered at the same moment from an adjoining apartment and fell on her knees by her mistress's side. Gerald acted promptly. He lifted his wife in his arms and carried her to the bed. Sitting down beside her, he chafed her cold hands energetically, while Hortense applied restoratives, with the result that, in a few minutes, Lucille with a deep sigh struggled back to consciousness. She gazed at her husband perplexedly at first and then, as she gradually collected her thoughts, and remembered her trouble, she gave way to a spasm of hysterical tears. Thoroughly alarmed, Gerald tried to soothe her, but for a time his efforts were unavailing. At last, however, worn out with the violence of her sobs, she sank into a doze.

Gerald sat beside the bed, and watched her anxiously. Sending Hortense away after a little while, he kept his vigil alone. That she had refused him forgiveness distressed him beyond measure, and he asked himself whether he might ever hope for pardon. Somehow, the seriousness of the case had not dawned upon him until now. He had comforted himself by protesting that Lucille was a woman and his wife, and, after all, it was her duty to forgive when there had been no real fault, but merely a careless lapse from strict integrity. He cursed himself for his lack of stability and for having allowed himself to drift into such a compromising position. He certainly had never intended to go so far. Then all the incidents of that last inter-

view recurred to him, and try as he would to put it from himself the fact that he had acted unworthily could not be denied. He admitted that he had no right to lay the whole blame upon Carol—and yet that letter, suggesting so much more than the truth! Beyond all question it had been written and sent for the one purpose of accomplishing his domestic undoing. Of this he was satisfied, and yet to explain it to Lucille without lowering himself in her eyes was out of the question. Should he attempt to clear himself at the expense of Mme. Stefani, his wife would, he felt sure, very properly despise him. It was a part unworthy of an honorable man's second thought; and then he smiled grimly at the word "honor." How much of that was he entitled to? He had played with temptation and had been too much of a coward to run away from danger.

He looked at the pale, drawn face of his wife; saw the heavy shadows under her eyes and the pathetic little droop of her mouth; and his heart ached for her. He had meant life to be so different for her. He had intended showing her only his best side—being worthy of the hero worship she had given him—and in less than three years his own hand had ruthlessly torn the veil aside from her adoring eyes, and robbed her of her choicest illusion. She had been so beautiful in her triumphant young faith. What would become of her now?

Sitting by the bedside of one he had wounded cruelly, almost unto death, this selfish man of the world learned his lesson, and prayed God he had not learned it too late.

CHAPTER XXXII.

When the cold, gray light of a February morning stole into the window, Gerald got up and walked softly across the room. The little French clock on the mantel showed him the time—half-past six—and Lucille was still sleeping. Then he rang for Hortense, and told her he was going to his room to change his clothes. Should Mrs. Townsend awake and seem feverish, he was to be sent for at once.

When, a little later, Lucille opened her eyes, she lay for some time staring at the ceiling, too weak and too miserable even to think. She saw clearly, however, that things could not go on as she had planned. She and Gerald could not live under the same roof as strangers; one of them must go away, and perhaps it was better that she should go. At first it could be made to appear that she was resting at Avondale after a hard social season, and then—well, perhaps, she would not care later what people thought.

Hortense heard her sigh, and came to the bedside.

"Did madame rest well?" inquired the maid, solicitously.

"Not very well. I am so tired this morning. I won't get up, and you need not remain in the room, Hortense. I am better alone. I'll ring when I want you," and Lucille turned her head wearily, and closed her eyes. She felt as if Hortense were trying to pry into the secret places of her soul. In spite of her twenty-four years and her three seasons in society, she was in some respects absurdly childish. Just now she felt aggrieved, and she de-

termined to shut herself up and abandon herself to the luxury of sorrow in solitude. Later she would have to meet Gerald, but now she must be alone, with time to brood over her troubles.

Gerald came to her room about noon. She was up at that hour, clad in a silk *négligé*, and lying on a couch. She raised her head languidly as he entered.

"Well?" was all she said, and he stood before her like an abashed schoolboy.

She listened to his defence calmly, but he was not convincing, and she saw that he was trying to shield the other woman. Every phrase of the letter was burned clearly upon her brain, and she repeated a sentence here and there, holding it up for special lucidation. He did not know it would be so difficult to clear himself and, as he finished, he saw that her face had not softened.

"Perhaps you have not done wrong according to your lights," she said, "but I realize now, more than ever, what a terrible mistake we both made in our marriage."

"You have not been happy?" he asked, his voice unsteady from the effort he made to keep it under control.

"You do well to put it in the past." she replied. "Yes, I have been very happy, but what good does that do me now? will it comfort me in the future, in the present when I am miserable?"

"Will you not believe me, trust me again?"

"How can I? My faith is as dead as my love for you."

He started as if he had been struck, and his face grew ghastly.

"Perhaps I have said too much, when I feared I could not say enough. I was mistaken when I

thought I could throw myself upon your generosity, your love. O Lucille, I never thought that would fail me!" he cried, thoroughly broken in spirit.

"That was your fault. You counted on my foolish credulity. Well, I have been foolish in my youth, but I pray heaven I may be wise in my old age, for there is nothing but wisdom left to me."

She was cruel, but she could not spare him. She felt that she must make him suffer. She did not know that his conscience had already stung him cruelly and that his remorse was torturing.

"What are you going to do?" he asked, finally, crushed with the outcome of the struggle.

"I think I shall go home. It will be the best for me, and people will not talk if I go to Avondale on a visit."

"You will come back?"

"I think not."

"O Lucille, I cannot lose you like this. You must believe me. I love you; you are my wife; you have ever been the one holy love of my life. I cannot let you go," and he knelt beside her couch, and held out his hands imploringly to her. And then only did she consent to stay. She did not forgive him, she said, but she would try to forget what had passed, and in time she might get over it.

. . . . . .

The last week before Lent was so unusually gay that she and Gerald saw little of each other. May's nonsense party was, according to that young woman "a howling success," and certainly the noise and laughter carried out that idea of it.

Lucille carried herself with stern dignity, but her heart was breaking under its weight of sorrow.

One day she heard accidentally that Mme. Stefani

had sailed for Paris, and then she watched Gerald furtively to see if he showed signs of unusual disturbance, but he was unmoved. He looked older, he cared less about going out and spent more time at the club, and Val Dinsmore saw the signs of coming disaster.

Gerald himself wondered how long this state of affairs would last. He thought of appealing to Isabel, but then even her tact might fail in the delicate question between husband and wife. He realized that Lucille was punishing him, but she was also punishing herself, and each day would make the reconciliation more difficult.

Then Lucille, in a fit of desperation, went south. She had a wild desire for flight and she indulged it. She could not sit opposite to him, day after day, at table, and meet his eyes. They pleaded his cause, and she longed to give in, to throw herself upon his breast, and tell him he was forgiven. No matter what he had done, she loved him. But she held herself in check, and he did not know how nearly his mute appeal had been answered. So she went away, feeling strong enough to nurse her wrongs once she was out of his dear presence.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Bess burst in upon Lucille like a whirlwind. She had travelled as far as Aiken in a desperate hurry. Her first intimation of Lucille's trouble came through May Hastings. May wrote her a long letter urging her to interfere.

"You are her best friend," she wrote, "and she may listen to you if she won't to any one else," and

after reading the letter through carefully, Bess told Jack that she had decided to make a change in their plans. He acquiesced, and they spent the evening in discussing Lucille's affairs.

Directly upon arriving at the hotel Bess had sent up her card to Lucille, but Lucille was out, and so she had to wait patiently until evening. They met first at dinner, and Bess was much shocked at the change in her friend. She could say little that evening, however, and impatiently awaited the morning to begin her fusillade of questions. Lucille looked up languidly as she entered.

"Is that you, dear? I am so glad to see you," she said, cordially.

Bess examined her critically, but made no comment. She talked about herself and Jack until she noticed Lucille's wandering attention. Then she stopped her trivial chatter and came straight to the point.

"What is wrong between you and Gerald?" she demanded, abruptly. "I feel half responsible for your marriage, you know. You met him under my roof; he proposed to you when you were in my care. Now tell me the truth: have you quarrelled?"

"You could hardly call it a quarrel, Bess," Lucille answered.

"Then what is wrong? Or, stay—let me guess. Is it Mme. Stefani?"

Lucille nodded.

"How foolish you are, Lou! She is nearly old enough to be your mother, and you submit calmly to her monopoly of your husband."

"I did not submit calmly."

"No, you ran away. Now listen to me seriously, Lucille. You started wrong. You went into matrimony refusing to know what it meant. You made

a hero out of Gerald, when he was only a man such as other men are; and then, when he lapsed into masculine folly, you deserted him. Don't protest, you did. You deserted him, when you should have stuck to him; won him back from that other woman, and made a firm stand for your rights. He would not have gone back on you; he would have admired your pluck, and loved you more than ever. O, I know men! That is what you should have done, but you didn't. You came south with friends, and played the rôle of the injured wife standing upon her dignity, leaving him to his own resources. Fortunately for you Mme. Stefani went back to Paris, and Gerald did nothing worse than start for Canada with Val Dinsmore. Do you know, Lucille, that a man must have a deal of good in him to have such loyal friends as Gerald has? Tell me the truth, Lou. What really happened between you two?"

Bess paused for breath, and Lucille, who had listened to the tirade with bowed head, began her story. She told it brokenly, as if it were still too painful to do more than touch lightly upon it.

"Why wouldn't you listen to his explanation?" asked Bess, when Lucille finished.

"What would have been the use. I could not believe him."

"My dear, marriage is giving and taking. If your husband offers you a plausible explanation, it is your duty to accept it, otherwise life together is impossible. Besides, Gerald is usually truthful."

"But in a case like this, the man is bound to shield the woman. I have learned so much in my short married life. Once I thought men despised women of that sort—foolish of me, wasn't it?—when, in reality, men will protect them even from the sharp tongues of their wives."

"Are you tired of the world because you have had your eyes opened? You are young, Lucille, and you have all your life before you. Don't spoil it. Call your pride to your aid, and make for yourself a position to be proud of. Are you going to give up the struggle because of one disappointment? Are you lacking in courage? What will you do if you continue in your anger against Gerald? Will you leave him permanently and let the world laugh at you for your defeat, and provide a new scandal for the gossips?"

"Don't, don't!" broke in Lucille, imploringly, while the tears streamed from her eyes. Bess had touched the right chord at last.

"Then forgive him, and be glad that you have nothing worse to condone. I am not at all certain of his fault. Mme. Stefani is capable of having written that letter, merely that it should fall into your hands."

"She must have had a reason for doing it."

"O, I don't doubt that she was in love with Gerald; only I think he went to see her simply for the sake of the past and, when she realized that, she wrote the letter out of revenge."

Bess's explanation sounded plausible and Lucille began to take comfort.

"I know he loved her once upon a time," she admitted.

"He was a boy then," Bess went on, "and she twisted him round her finger as she did so many others. She never was young, I hear. She was scheming when she was a mere girl, and succeeded in coaxing candy and matinée tickets out of her father's friends. I know all about her. Mary Osgood is a cousin of my mother's, you know, and I've heard many unpleasant little stories about Carol Stefani."

Bess was averse to gossip, but she gave this information cheerfully, hoping it might convince Lucille of her husband's innocence.

"She is awfully clever, though. Gerald says she is the cleverest woman he ever met."

"Perhaps, but awfully clever women may be unprincipled. You don't deny that, do you?"

"No."

"Then why not accept my theory? You and Gerald must come to an understanding soon. Why not start in by being fair to him?"

"I did not mean to be otherwise."

"Yet you prefer to believe the worst of him."

"If it had been Jack instead of Gerald," began Lucille slowly; then, as Bess flushed painfully, she added quickly, "but it couldn't have been Jack. He is not that sort of a man. I never would judge Gerald by other men's standards, and now I am punished for my blindness."

Yes, Bess was right. She had started in life with a wrong conception. She had expected perfection, and had despaired when she found only ordinary humanity. Her love had been so absorbing that she had demanded more than a man was able to give. That was her fault, not his and, as she found herself making allowances for Gerald, a bitter little smile curled the corners of her lips. Bess noted it with anxiety.

"What are you going to do, Lucille?" she asked at length, finding the silence intolerable.

"Make the best of it, I suppose; but O, dear, it is hard. I only wanted to set his image in my heart, and sacrifice to it, and I may not do even that."

Lucille's eyes filled with tears but, as they were the first she had shed since the night of her sorrow, some of the bitterness of her soul was washed away

by them. Bess took her hand, and the warm pressure of her fingers expressed her devoted friendship.

So they sat, hand in hand, the one woman battling with her sorrow, and the other praying that the sea of trouble might not overwhelm one who was so dear to her.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OVERHEAD, the cloudless blue of an April sky; on all sides the virgin forest, while from far away came the murmur of a noisy stream swollen by recent freshets. In the middle of the clearing stood a modest log cabin, evidently a hunting lodge. A thin spiral of smoke curled upwards from the rude chimney, testifying to the presence of mankind within.

The report of a gun in the distance brought a man to the cabin's door. He stood for a moment listening, and then went back, and began to prepare for the noonday meal. Presently two men appeared at the edge of the clearing, carrying an apparently heavy burden between them. One of them raised his voice and shouted. He was an uncouth figure in his rough tweeds, leather leggins and battered slouch hat, and it would have required a second glance to assure most people that it was really Val Dinsmore. Lounging in a Fifth Avenue club window, he was one man; shooting game in the Canadian forest, he was quite another, as he himself would not have hesitated to inform you.

At the sound of the voice the man in the cabin came slowly to the door again, but uttered an ex-

clamation of alarm as he saw that the burden the others were carrying was the inert figure of a man.

"For God's sake!" he cried. "What has happened? Is Townsend dead?"

Val groaned.

"I hope not," he answered. "We brought him back as quickly as we could."

He and the guide carried Gerald into the hut, and with Eliot's assistance undressed him and examined the wound.

"How it happened I don't know," explained Val hastily. "He was ahead of us; suddenly I heard the report of a gun, and when I came up he was lying on the ground senseless. I called Jake, and we picked him up and carried him as carefully as we could; but he hasn't opened his eyes since."

Eliot, who had studied medicine, though he had never taken his degree, was examining the wounded shoulder. The collar-bone was broken, and the flesh riddled with shot; but Gerald was still alive, and breathing faintly. The administration of restoratives brought him around after a time, and opening his eyes he asked, dazedly,

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing much, old chap," answered Val soothingly. "You met with an accident. Now be quiet, and go to sleep, and you'll be all right in the morning." The blood he had lost made him light-headed, and he could not clearly realize what had happened. When he closed his eyes again, Val and Eliot went outside, to talk it over.

"What had we better do?" asked Val, deferring to his brother's superior knowledge in such cases.

"It's ten miles to Brockton. I suppose one of us ought to go there immediately and get help. If we could move him to the hotel, he would have

the necessary medical attention. Will you go, or shall I?"

"I will," answered Val. "If anything goes wrong, meanwhile, you know better than I what to do."

Gerald was moved that night, and though he bore the trip well, the local doctor shook his head gravely, and asked if it would not be wise to send for his family. Val started. Lucille! He had quite forgotten her. Surely in the face of Gerald's danger, she would not refuse to come to him.

When Gerald had proposed this expedition, Val felt sure that he had abandoned hope of a reconciliation. He had inveighed bitterly against all human folly, but he had confined himself to generalities, and Val was not in his confidence.

When Eliot had joined them a few weeks later, he had brought news of Lucille, telling how she was quite a belle in the southern colony, and seemed to be in capital health and enjoying herself immensely. But Gerald knew better. He knew that she was suffering—suffering as few women are capable of suffering; for the greater their faith, the more terrible the moment of disillusionment. Sick at heart, he had come away, longing for the solitude that cannot be found in a great city; but there was no peace for him, either by day or night. His folly haunted him, until he groaned aloud, under a burden that was growing too heavy for him to bear.

It took several days to reach Lucille by telegraph, the first message arriving at Ashville, after she had started north with Bess, whose words had made a strong impression upon her.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PITY awoke the maternal instinct that lies at the bottom of all good women's love, and pity at the sight of the helpless form outstretched before her did more to convince the wife of her husband's innocence than any words of his or Bess's.

He had said to her once in those early days, when she had walked like a princess in a fairy tale, that he would like to keep her always beside him; to know that though she might not understand, she would never fail him; that was his conception of her character, and yet, put to a crucial test, she had failed him. She admitted that, but she would give him his chance again. She owed it to him.

If good women withdraw their influence at the first sign of frailty in a man, theirs is the fault if the man never climbs back again to his place. "For better, for worse," reads the marriage service, and if to most women the worse comes, they are all sisters in sorrow and must bear their burdens without complaint.

Though she could never enshrine him in her heart again as an idol, she would not deny him her affection. And so she went back to him, and when he opened his eyes and saw her, he understood.

They spent another honeymoon in the quaint Canadian village, and Gerald submitted to the coddling and nursing all invalids are supposed to enjoy. They heard frequently from their friends, but neither was anxious to return to the scenes of their recent estrangement, and they dawdled away the summer trying to forget the past.

Though she was more his companion than for-

merly, Lucille would have given the rest of her life for one hour of the old sweet madness that could never return.

One day she came into the room, her arms laden with wild flowers. Gerald was standing by the window, but he turned as she entered, and she saw that he was pale and troubled.

"What is it?" she asked. "Have you had bad news, dear?"

She put the flowers on the table and crossed the room to his side.

"Upsetting news," he answered. "Lucille, Carol Stefani is dead."

Lucille started. Some tone in his voice made her realize that it was not the mere fact of her death that had upset him, there was something else.

"Did she die suddenly?" she asked, forcing herself to speak calmly.

"Very suddenly, my dear; she took her own life."

"O Gerald! How terrible!"

"I received a letter to-day from her lawyers, telling me the bald facts of the case and forwarding a little packet addressed to me. The few letters I had written her when we first met, and a note from Carol herself bidding me farewell. Will you read it, Lucille? You will understand her then."

"No, it was not meant for my eyes," she answered.

"Perhaps it was," he suggested.

"Besides, the confidence of the dead is sacred. Poor woman, how she must have suffered to commit suicide!" Lucille struggled to be generous to her dead rival.

"She suffered more than you realize, for she outlived herself."

"What do you mean?"

"She outlived her faith, her hope, her charity; and without these things, what is life? She was brilliant, with a man's audacity of thought; clever with the incisive cleverness of modernity; cynical, solitary and unhappy. What was left for her but death?"

Gerald was deeply moved. Pity took the place of every harsher sentiment in his thought of her.

Lucille grew troubled. How he must have loved her once, to feel her death so keenly! She wondered if her own peace of mind would be disturbed again. She stole from his side and went back to her flowers.

"Lucille," he called, "come here, dear." But she did not move.

"You are not jealous of my pity for her, are you? She came near wrecking our lives once, but we are safe in love's harbor now, and she may be beating the wings of her soul despairingly at the outer gates of heaven."

Lucille raised a cluster of fragrant blossoms to her face, and then she turned and offered them to him.

"She was your past, Gerald," she said softly.

The old light flashed in his eyes before it died out forever.

"She was an episode in my past," he answered, "while you are my whole future."

THE END.

MURIEL.

Artless eyes of shady brown
  Hide their secrets deep and well,
Sable tresses often crown
  Heads where thoughts uneasy dwell,
Rosy lips and soft, white arms
  Need not any story tell;
All these non-committal charms
  Has my mischief, Muriel.

If those merry eyes of brown,
  All they've seen would only tell,
If that dark hair, tumbling down,
  Hid its secrets not so well,
If warm lips and gentle arms
  Their sweet silence should dispel,
Would I then find fewer charms
  In my dainty Muriel?

Nay; such thought is not for me!
  Mine to live on, counting well
All the blessings that there be,
  Striving not to blast their spell;
Folly 'twere for such as I
  On some secret shades to dwell,
When a smile can satisfy,
  If it be from Muriel!

The Lover.

TO RAPHAEL.

BY BLISS CARMAN.

MASTER of adored Madonnas,
  What is this men say of thee?
Thou wert something less than honor's
  Most exact epitome?

Yes, they say you loved too many,
  Loved too often, loved too well;
Just as if there could be any
  Over-loving, Raphael!

Was it, "Sir, and how came this tress,
  Long and raven? Mine are gold!"
You should have made Art your mistress,
  Lived an anchorite and old!

Ah, no doubt these dear good people
  On familiar terms with God,
Could devise a parish steeple
  Built to heaven without a hod.

You and Solomon and Cæsar
  Were three fellows of a kind;
Not a woman, but to please her
  You would leave your soul behind.

Those dead women with their beauty,
  How they must have loved you well,
Dared to make desire a duty,
  With the heretics of hell!

And your brother, that Catullus,
  What a plight he must be in,
If those silver songs that lull us
  Were result of mortal sin!

If the artist were ungodly,
  Prurient of mind and heart,
I must think they argue oddly
  Who make shrines before his art.

Not the meanest aspiration
  Ever sprung from soul depraved
Into art, but art's elation
  Was the sanctity it craved.

Oh, no doubt you had your troubles,
  Devils blue that blanched your hope.
I dare say your fancy's bubbles,
  Breaking, had a taste of soap.

Did your ladyloves undo you
  In some mediæval way?
Ah, my Raphael, here's to you!
  It is much the same to-day.

Did their tantalizing laughter
  Make your wisdom overbold?
Were you fire at first; and after,
  Did their kisses leave you cold?

Did some fine perfidious Nancy,
  With the roses in her hair,
Play the marsh-fire to your fancy
  Over quagmires of despair?

My poor boy, were there more flowers
  In your Florence and your Rome,
Wasting through the gorgeous hours,
  Than your two hands could bring home?

Be content, you have your glory,
  Life was full, and sleep is well.
What the end is of the story,
  There's no paragraph to tell.

FORGIVEN.

"So, you want to marry my daughter?"

"Yes, sir; I have a college education, and"——

"Never mind that. I am willing to overlook it if you will promise to reform and live a good life from now on."

The Reformer.

AGAIN THE TROLLEY.

"ADAM and Eve had a fall, you know."

"Yes, I suppose they blamed it on the poor motorman."

The Brooklynite.

PROOF OF HIS LOVE.

"Do you love the sea?"

"Yes; I have often given up everything for it."

The Tar.

NAME HAS AN OMINOUS SOUND.

MISS BELLINGHAM—Ethel is driving a trap now.

MISS HUNGERFORD—Whom does she expect to catch in it?

The Sly Dog.

THE ONLY EXPLANATION.

JONES—They say Robbins shed tears at his mother-in-law's funeral.

BROWN—He must have laughed till he cried.

The Weeper.

METHOD IN HIS SUDDENNESS.

SHE—This is so sudden.

HE—I know it, but I thought I would try my luck before your father got home.

The Wary One.

PERTINENT AFTER ALL.

SUB-EDITOR OF "THE SOCIAL SWIM"—There's a bad break in the paper this week. "Answers to Correspondents" is printed "Answers to Co-Respondents."

EDITOR—Never mind. It will go all right. Most of our readers are Chicago society people.

The Captain.

THE ADAGE CAME TRUE.

"IN journeying through life, my son,"
The rich old man would say,
"Remember that 'Where there's a will,
You'll always find a way.'"

He died. It took the lawyers just
A month to prove it true:
They found "the will" and, what is more,
"The way"—to break it, too!

The Contestant.

A ROUND-UP.

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF A MIDDLE-AGED MAN.

When James Forsyth married Elizabeth Sampson every one remarked that it was simply a case of a young woman and an old fool, and then proceeded to make the bride welcome to her new home and speedily forgot all else in the excitement of the festivities. The two people who said nothing perhaps retained their opinion of the combination recently formed by the bond of matrimony from the fact that their ideas had no vent in words, and long after other people had become accustomed to the bride, Mr. and Mrs. Richmond still regarded her as an unexpected gift—not of the gods, but of the Fates. Not even to each other did they mention the thoughts that were revolving in their minds, and in order that neither should suspect the other of having a particular interest in the new arrival, they talked long and frequently upon all other topics; and the time had long since passed when Mr. and Mrs. Richmond conversed with each other, unless it was for a reason. From the very fact that each realized this attitude toward the other, both wondered what might be the cause, and shrewdly suspected, judging from personal sensations, that the reason was not one to be discussed or even admitted. So, while curiosity was rampant, discretion carried the day, and they forbore a comment lest the aggressive party should suddenly be forced upon the defensive. Odds were

a trifle in favor of Mrs. Richmond, for though not sure, she felt inclined to believe that Mr. Richmond's intense suavity of manner and general air of devotion to the bride, when they met, was induced by the time when, as Miss Sampson, she had visited there, and Mr. Richmond's able manœuvrings, and not haphazard chance, had made it possible for that young lady to spend hours, many and frequent, in his society. Accustomed as Mrs. Richmond was to her husband finding the society of some other woman all engrossing, it caused her no uneasiness or pique that Miss Sampson should at that time fill all requirements. If her toleration or forbearance were inspired by any such reason as her having diversions of her own, at least she did not flaunt the heresy openly, and certainly took all precautions against wounding her husband's *amour propre.* A sufficient number of years had passed since Mr. and Mrs. Richmond had been joined together to have had her see the wane of many a platonic or sentimental friendship when her husband played the leading part, but not until his intimate intercourse with Miss Sampson was over did Mrs. Richmond realize it had come to an abrupt end; that, whereas yesterday they had been friends, to-day they were but as strangers, and as much as she concerned herself with anything that had to do with her husband, she wondered what had happened. But life is short, and its days not sufficiently long, and it took all of Mrs. Richmond's to keep her own affairs running smoothly and at a pace to her own liking, while yet making the world believe that she went at a decorous and even walk as suited to a matron of thirty-eight. Also, investigation of a thing past was somewhat in the way of throwing water on cold ashes. But above all else, did she believe in living and let-

ting live, with the one burning exception, when she meant to slay and live in triumph afterward.

Such was the state of affairs when Mrs. Richmond, one day at luncheon, received a note. Mr. Richmond, at the other end of the table, saw the writing and recognized it.

"A note from Mrs. Forsyth asking me to tea tomorrow, informally," Mrs. Richmond said, taking up her fork.

"You will go?" Mr. Richmond's tone was interrogatory.

"Oh, yes, I have no other engagement."

"A bit dull, though, I should fancy—a *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Forsyth!"

"An odd thing for you to say," his wife commented, "though you are qualified to give an opinion."

"Pardon me, my dear, I have never had a *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Forsyth."

"Ah, true!" she laughed—"a difference as well as a distinction, perhaps. Shall I let you know tomorrow?"

"As you like." Richmond was indifferent. If there was anything new of interest about the bride, he did not believe his wife would repeat it; she was not given to imparting exclusive information. And commonplace observations he really did not care to hear.

If Mrs. Forsyth had any idea of the interest she excited in the breasts of her quondam friends she displayed no trace of it, and her greeting of Mrs. Richmond the next day, while cordial, was not particulary impressive. Mrs. Richmond, whose perceptions were keen, felt she was kept aloof, and being a woman of great charm equalled by determination, she resolved to alter that attitude; and as she fol-

lowed her hostess upstairs, her mind was working with agility, aided by a certain previous knowledge of Mrs. Forsyth's temperament.

"It is a very great pleasure to have you as a guest, Mrs. Richmond," her hostess said, drawing a big chair before the fire and settling herself in another as she spoke.

Mrs. Richmond scrutinized her carefully, but none the less keenly. The bride had the same delicate coloring that she had always admired, and the evenly marked brows, Mrs. Richmond was forced to admit, were uncommonly pretty. Altogether, Mrs Forsyth was a woman she would look at a second time. The hostess was still talking.

"It was at your house that I first saw anything of Mr. Forsyth, you know! I'm not sure but what I owe you a great debt. You must show me how to repay it."

Mrs. Richmond smiled sweetly.

"Knowing you like to pay your debts, if you are under obligations indeed I will try to equalize them."

"Thank you. By the way, I came across such a clever article the other day. I want you to see it!" She got up and began rummaging among a pile of books and newspapers. "This table is in such a chaotic state one cannot find anything." She tossed aside a newspaper and disclosed a tin letter-box, the sight of which turned her crimson, and she looked hastily at her guest. Mrs. Richmond, all alert, noticed both the confusion and the cause. She herself had a similar case, only she never failed to keep it carefully put away.

Mrs. Forsyth recovered her self-possession with an effort, and her guest impersonally admired the *sang froid* with which she ignored the box.

"I canot find the magazine, and here comes Jane with the tea. I must look it up later and send it to you."

She went over to the tray and turned out the tea as she talked, and all the while Mrs. Richmond's eyes covertly examined the box. It was locked, because Mrs. Forsyth had picked it up by the lid and it had not opened. If only she knew what was in it. Letters of course! A great inspiration flooded Mrs. Richmond's mind. She would sound Mr. Forsyth, and if he did not know of it she would contrive to let him. More than likely some of Mr. Richmond's letters were there lying alongside those Mr. Forsyth had sent his *fiancée*. The combination would please a husband so much! She knew Mr. Richmond had written Miss Sampson; she had seen two different envelopes directed to her. And Mrs. Richmond also knew that her husband's letters were such as women rarely destroy and frequently reread. If with one fell swoop she could round up the bride, Mr. Forsyth and Mr. Richmond, then indeed would justice be fulfilled and her soul be at rest within her! So intent was her mind upon the project and how to carry it out, that she hurried away at the earliest moment after tea in order to plan the campaign, and Mr. Richmond found her so abstracted at dinner that he was convinced something had occureed that afternoon and awaited the developments with interest not unmixed with anxiety.

Two days later Mrs. Forsyth, toasting her feet before the fire in the den, was interrupted by Mr. Forsyth, who lighted a cigar and seated himself with a deep sigh.

"Nasty day," he said. "As I was passing Richmond's, Mrs. Richmond saw me and called me in. She's a nice woman. Likes you tremendously."

"Yes?"

"Yes, talked about you most of the time. Said you were the one woman she had been almost jealous of. Richmond was very devoted to you, wasn't he?"

"Very," his wife assented, laughing. "To be devoted to some one is necessary to his existence."

"H'm!" Forsyth smoked in silence a second: "What does a woman think of a man like that?" he demanded suddenly.

"That he isn't worth thinking about!"

"I hadn't noticed"—Mr. Forsyth flicked the ashes from his cigar as he spoke—"until Mrs. Richmond mentioned it just now, that he seems to avoid you since you came back. Have you noticed it, too?"

"He would hardly be as devoted to a married woman, dear, as he would to a girl."

"*He* would!" Forsyth remarked, grimly. "Maid, wife or widow, it is all the same to him, so they are women! Bessie, what happened between you and Richmond?"

"Why should you think anything happened?"

"Because I know something did. I recollect now that he never talks with you, and is only necessarily polite."

"Aren't you growing rather observing in trifles, Jim?"

"Oh, no. I shouldn't have thought of it except that Mrs. Richmond mentioned it. She was afraid he had annoyed you in some way."

"She is very considerate," Mrs. Forsyth said, slowly. "No; he has not annoyed me. What else did she say?"

"Nothing special. Though—you were a very unusual young woman—wherein I coincided—and hoped I appreciated that the young wife of an elderly

gentleman has much opportunity for diversion. I didn't think that was very kind of her, but the general truth of it was not to be denied."

His wife laughed and Forsyth puffed at away his cigar. The fire crackled and glowed, and Mrs. Forsyth was sinking into a reverie, from which her husband roused her.

"Bess, did Richmond ever write you?"

Mrs. Forsyth rose, and, going over by her husband's chair, knelt on the floor.

"Old dear," she said, "you have Mr. Richmond on the brain! Why do you bother yourself about him?"

"But did he?"

"I shall not tell you."

Forsyth threw away his cigar and began pacing the floor.

"If you refuse to answer I shall take it as an admission that he did," he said, at length.

"Not necessarily."

"Dear, I know Richmond thoroughly. He is an unusually fascinating man in every way—a man whom women are as wax with. He must have made love to you."

"But I *married* you!" she interrupted.

"Yes, a man double your own age. Do you suppose I think that you can love me as I do you?"

"Jim!"

"Oh, I know you are fond of me, but not as you might be of a younger man—of Richmond, for instance, who is a woman's beau ideal."

Mrs. Forsyth rose.

"I think you do not realize," she said, "that you are practically accusing me of being in love with another woman's husband. It is not flattering to your-

self!" She laid her hand on his arm. "Don't you think we might let this drop? I *married* you, and you were not a *pis aller*," she concluded with a half laugh.

"But Mr. Forysth had been stirred to the innermost depths of his nature, and his mind was firmly fixed in one direction, from which nothing could swerve it.

"And I believe that you care for him."

"Jim!"

"There is every reason why you should have unconsciously, and when you discovered it, how I do not know, in your hurt you turned to—me, not in pique particularly, but with the instinct that makes us all, when we are unhappy, turn to some one who cares for us."

"Jim, do you not see that Mrs. Richmond has filled your mind with insinuations? She does not like me and I refuse to be a puppet for her to pull the string!"

"You are wrong. Only just now she said how much she liked you."

"Oh, you guileless infant of fifty-five, what else should she say to you?"

"I do not care to have you talk so of Mrs. Richmond, Bessie, and this no longer concerns her. I am your husband and I ask what is in that tin box!"

"What tin box!"

"I know of but one."

Mrs. Forsyth walked to the table and caught the edge in a firm grasp.

"And that you know of through Mrs. Richmond?"

Mrs. Forsyth was certainly smiling, and the sight roused her husband's ire.

"You think it amusing, apparently, but you are mistaken; and I am not jealous"——

"Dear, I am laughing at the foolishness of it. Here are you and I deep in a quarrel, which is just what Mrs. Richmond wanted. Now, I won't quarrel, Jim. Do you hear? I *won't*. And I *won't* tell you what's in that box, either; so please let us not talk any more about it!"

Forsyth unclasped her hands and regarded her sternly.

"When you tell me what that box contains, and not before, will I drop the subject. I know there are letters in it—Richmond's, which you keep to regale yourself with"——

"Jim!" Mrs. Forsyth was undoubtedly small, but her indignation seemed to put her on a level with her husband as she drew herself up. "I forbid you to speak another word, and I decline to see you again until you apologize for grossly insulting me. As this is my room, I shall ask you to leave it!" She faced him uncompromisingly.

"I have not insulted you unless speaking what I believe to be the truth is insulting. I shall dine at the club to-night."

His wife walked over to the window and turned her back to the room. She heard the door close, and a few minutes later saw Forsyth making his way down the street in the face of the blinding snowstorm. "She is even more clever than I thought," Mrs. Forsyth said aloud.

Forsyth at the club, having ordered a dinner of the sort that had constituted happiness in his bachelor days, found the things as sawdust to his palate, and his particular vintage of Pommard had the acidity of an *ordinaire*. Before his eyes floated always visions of a square tin box packed with letters, and

guarding it with an air of dauntless determination was the woman whom, until now, he had regarded more or less as a child. The men who sauntered into the room tried to talk with him at first, but he was so visibly out of sorts that they formed their own conclusions and dropped away. The sound of their laughter irritated him, and, swearing under his breath, he pushed away the unfinished coffee and left the table.

Before the fire in the reading-room his thoughts still absorbed him, and the dancing flames reminded him of Bess. How the big colonial fireplace would delight her. Gad, how her eyes had blazed when she sent him away. He never supposed she had such a will; until now she had always been sweet and gracious except when she teased, and he rather enjoyed that. It always ended by his taking her in his arms and kissing her. He got up suddenly; the last thought overwhelmed him! He would go back and ask her to destroy the contents of the box. That was all he wanted, and when the apple of discord was removed they would be good friends again. He wanted her, and Richmond—Richmond was nothing to her. He was sure of it.

Outside the club he hailed a hansom and went rapidly home. The house, as he let himself in, was very quiet; there were no callers evidently, and he breathed a sigh of thanksgiving. Bess must be in her den. It occurred to him, boyishly, that he would surprise her, and he went quietly upstairs and opened the library door softly. And then the erstwhile repentant and eager husband became once more as Bluebeard, for standing on the hearth-rug was his youthful bride, and with her, kissing her hand, was the serpent who had entered his Eden and whispered words of guile to his Eve.

The presence of mind that Mrs. Forsyth evinced at the interruption, instead of pleasing her husband, convinced him that, though young, she was experienced, and in the space of half a minute he saw himself in the divorce court, attended his own case and finished it, not a gay bachelor, alas! but a saddened widower. Then to his surprise he found himself speaking to the destroyer of his happiness.

"How are you, Richmond?"

"In great form, old man, thanks to a delightful evening with Mrs. Forsyth!"

"You've come back just in time, Jim," Mrs. Forsyth said cheerfully. "I believe Mr. Richmond was making me grow sentimental." Forsyth was appalled at such brazenness. He rather expected her to fall on her knees and implore forgiveness, but his thought did not impart itself to her. "Have you had a nice time?" she went on.

"Very." The lie stuck in his throat a second, but he brought it out by an heroic effort. Pride forbade that he should be outdone.

"Sit down," the hardened sinner urged him cordially, herself setting the example.

"I must be going along," Richmond said; "I've been here an unconscionable time already." Forsyth stood in frozen silence while Richmond made his adieu, and he only nodded as the other man went off. He not only declined to go downstairs with the wrecker of his peace, but he declined to apologize for not going.

Meantime in the library reigned a Quaker silence that Mrs. Forsyth at last broke.

"If you want to apologize to me, Jim, I'll consider it all said, dear."

Twice did the forgiven man open his lips to speak, and each time he closed them. But the lucky num-

ber helped him, and the third effort was crowned with success.

"I am afraid to say anything," he began, "because I should say too much. I came back because I believed I had been mistaken. Now I know I was right. I demand that you open that box and destroy those letters in my presence; afterward I will see what is to be done!"

Mrs. Forsyth stared.

"Do you know, Jim, I believe you're a bit out of your head. And because I consider you irresponsible for what you say and mean, I will tell you that that box does not contain one letter from Mr. Richmond or any one else. Now are you satisfied?"

But Forsyth was beyond concessions.

"At the risk of seeming insulting I must ask leave to doubt you. Furthermore, I *demand* you shall open that box."

"You may demand as much as you please," Mrs. Forsyth said resolutely, "but I absolutely refuse to do it. Do you understand? I refuse. When you want to come to me and apologize, I will see you. Until then you will kindly not put yourself in my way." And before Forsyth could collect himself she had gone into her chamber and closed the door.

Appearances indicated a deadlock. Mr. Forsyth had issued an ultimatum that had evoked another in return. He had always supposed that wives obeyed their husbands when they were commanded. It was true that lack of experience made him unqualified to judge, but theoretically he knew that they did; the practical illustration seemed to the contrary. And his heart was heavy within him and his mind was distraught with doubts.

His rest that night was a hollow mockery, and he

belied the general opinion of himself as having an unimaginative mind. He went through mental experiences such as he had never known in all his fifty-five full and diversified years, and he rose the next morning borne down by his own misery, wishing that the man concerned were any other than Richmond, so that he might seek counsel of Mrs. Richmond in his dire distress.

Mrs. Forsyth was not at the breakfast table; the maid said that her coffee was being served upstairs, and while he drank his Forsyth read his paper and tried to pretend that he preferred reading the news to talking on trivial matters. But his imagination had worn itself out in the night and dissolved, spent and weary. He was wholly matter of fact now, so much so that he regretted that decency forbade his retreating to the club to drink himself into oblivion. He wondered what his wife did while she was unhappy, and the poignancy of his misery was increased as he recollected that except for anger she had shown no indication of anything but extreme cheerfulness.

He had worked himself to a pitch of viewing only a shattered and forsaken fireside, and the rock on which his domestic bark was wrecked took the shape of a small tin letter-box. He heard the front door close, and going into the drawing-room with a celerity inconsistent with his idea of the dignity attendant upon himself, he beheld his determined young wife, looking as fresh as a June morning, and most irreproachably arrayed, give an order to the footman, and stepping into the brougham whirl rapidly away. That was the last straw! If she had had the grace to look unhappy, or even anxious and a little pale, he might have forgiven her. But while he was gaunt and haggard, her cheeks were deli-

cately pink, and her brow fair with the calm and unbroken night's rest. And at the sight Mr. Forsyth fell from the high estate of manhood which he had hitherto held invulnerable and sent for his wife's maid.

"When will Mrs. Forsyth return?" he asked.

"Only in time to dress for dinner, sir."

"Do you know where she keeps a square tin box?"

"Sir?"

"You heard. Where is the box kept?"

"I don't understand, sir."

"There is no need of your lying to me. I want the box; now answer."

"The only tin box I know of, sir, Mrs. Forsyth keeps in the cabinet in her room."

"Very well, you may go."

The woman left the room with features as impassive as when she entered. The greater the thinking abilities of a well-trained servant the more expressionless is the face. But Mr. Forsyth's own mind was too much dominated by one idea to remember anything else, and he went upstairs—with purpose in his heart and determination in his tread—straight to the cabinet in his wife's room. As he reached it, pity for her swept through his mind that she should be so indiscreet as to leave the key in the door. There, on the third shelf, surrounded with laces and feminine frills redolent of the illusive sachet she used, was the cause of all his trouble—a black box about ten inches long and four deep. He picked it up and carried it into the library about as he would have handled a poisonous reptile, and his fingers were strained with the clutch of it. Truly tragedy hung over the household of Forsyth.

A narrow Spanish knife on the table seemed

suited to his purpose, wholly so, he thought, and inserting the point in the keyhole he gave it an uncompromising thump with a heavy paper-weight. The lock loosened, but still held, and the failure angered him. Once more he fitted the point, and the next blow bespoke the firmness of his muscle; age most assuredly had not settled upon him yet! The blade flew into pieces and the lock snapped; Forsyth lifted the cover with a sensation of fierce exultation and then gazed dumfounded, and just back of him he heard his wife say calmly:

"Well?"

He turned and looked at her speechless and then back to the box, and the "make-up" in it—a pot of rouge, a dark pencil, some powder and cold cream.

"If you lift out the tray you'll find a hare's foot and a puff underneath," Mrs. Forsyth said. Then she sat down and began to laugh. Peal after peal came hysterically, and Forsyth stood like an imbecile. The shock was too much for his tautened intellect.

"If it wasn't so funny, Jim," Mrs. Forsyth gasped, "I should never forgive you—never!" Another outburst of laughter stopped her, and it was a moment before she could speak again. "But it's the most delicious farce-comedy I ever saw in my life?" She wiped her eyes and checked the impulse to laugh again. "It's irresistible! Jim, dear, if ever you lose your money you could gain fame playing the jealous husband! Oh, the ludicrousness of it! My make-up box!" And she leaned back and laughed again.

"Bess!" Surprise and shame and remorse were mingled in Forsyth's tone.

"We've been married three months and you never

knew that I rouged, and yet they say that women can't keep a secret! And I darken my eyebrows, too. Oh, I am a most reprehensible young woman, Jim!"

Forsyth stood silently gazing at her.

"Just see how you have shattered one of your own illusions," she went on teasingly. "You thought my 'rose-leaf' color was the bloom of youth, and so it is! But nature having denied me the least vestige of it, I am forced to resort to art. And while golden hair is desirable, golden brows tend to make one's face lack character, and I don't believe in allowing appearances to be deceitful!"

"I have disgraced myself!" Forsyth said, miserably. "No apology can cover the insult I have given you."

"No, I don't think it could," his wife agreed cheerfully, "so let it go! Trust me another time, dear," she said seriously. "Mrs. Richmond nearly succeeded; don't let her try again. She hates me because once, in an indiscreet moment, she intimated that her hold upon you was so strong that you would never marry any woman." She caught her breath before she continued, lightly. "Then you see, dear, you married me, the woman above all others she would rather not have had you care for!"

Forsyth laid his hand anxiously on her shoulder. "Do you want to know about her?" he asked.

"No, not at all. I know that now you care for me, and that is enough. What you did in the years before is not a thing that causes me any anxiety. But you were right about Mr. Richmond making love to me. I gave him a very forcible piece of my mind for it. He didn't like my expressions of contempt for him," she added, reflectively, "but later he wrote an apology, and last night,

when you saw him, he had just thanked me for accepting it."

"If only there was something I could say," Forsyth groaned.

His wife got up and went over to him.

"Well, there isn't," she said; "not a thing, because I won't let you. I hate to see a man abase himself. Kiss me, dear, and think what a huge joke it is. We can afford to, you know, for though the Richmonds laughed first, the last laugh is mine. And what is mine is yours!" *The Story Teller.*

THE ONLY WAY TO WIN.

First Hard Character—I was at the races Saturday. Scooped in three hundred.

Second Hard Character—Picked winners?

First Hard Character—Naw. Pockets.

The Financier.

IN THE TOMBS CORRIDOR.

Warden—Sentenced? How's that? I thought that your lawyer was going to ask for more time.

Corkey—He did, and I got two years.

The Justice.

A NICE LAYOUT.

Lax—That was a great spread you had at your house last night.

Pixley—Yes; my wife is learning to do the split.

The Clubman.

AN EARLY RISER.

"WHY are you up before me again?" said the magistrate severely, to an old offender.

"I was up at 6.30, sir," replied the prisoner. "At what time did your honor rise?"

The Judge showed his appreciation of such levity by adding sixty days to the culprit's sentence.

The Soaker.

BLUBBER'S CONVERSION.

BILKINS—I hear that Blubber believes in cremation.

WILKINS—There was evidence of that when he married Kitty Flashleigh.

The Experienced One

A MERE CIPHER.

HEWITT—You think you are sharp, but I tell you a man could bunco you.

JEWETT—Bunco nothing!

HEWITT—That's what I meant.

The Flatterer.

NO OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.

SEXTON—Excuse me for reminding you, sir, but you haven't paid your pew rent for the current quarter.

DIMPLETON—Well, that is a matter between me and my God.

The Devotee.

A LOVE STORY.

He was a brave, but not a Sioux;
He loved his wigwam loyal and trioux,
But thought of another wigwam tioux,
For he loved a girl by the name of Sioux,
Whose eyes were a dark, deep blioux;
And every day his great love grioux,
And earnestly, lovingly he did wioux,
But Sioux
Smiled on a hated Giouxgioux,
Tioux.

Now 'twas the brave, now the Giouxgioux,
She kept them both in a deuce of a stioux,
Which she loved best neither knioux,
For she had the tic diouxliouxrioux.
The Gioux spent money, the brave did tioux
Bouquets, concerts, theatre, Zioux,
For money often goes in lioux
Of youth, or face of ruddy hioux,
Or learning, goodness and all of that crioux.

The brave, his money blioux,
His bills accrioux,
His board is dioux,
His friends are fioux,
Love he does rioux,
He is in a stioux
And feeling blioux.
Wouldn't yioux, tioux?
For Sioux
Wedded the Giouxgioux,
Bioux-hioux!

The Phonologist.

THE STORY OF WILLIAM.

A NOVELETTE UP TO DATE.

This is the story of Whiskey Bill
From poorhouse hill;
He's the man who never worked
And never will.

In early life he rushed the collection box in the village church, and learned to steal the pretty buttons people put in the box. Then he went to the bad, then from bad he went to worse, then to Albany and to Congress. Now he is behind the bars for the first time in his life, and on his office door it says:

Gone to jail
Back in thirty days.

The Chump.

THE DIFFERENCE.

Stranger (*at the theatre*)—I want to see the author of this comedy.

Manager—Step right in and look for the man who is laughing himself to death in the front row.

Stranger—No, I guess it's the backer I want to see.

Manager—Two doors to the right. You will find him drinking himself to death at the bar.

The First Nighter.

A FREAK OF NATURE.

THE STORY OF AN UNCONVENTIONAL WOMAN.

Miss Stuyvesant, self-supporting through necessity, living *en garçon* through desire, decided, while blowing very perfect rings with her cigarette smoke as she lay upon the divan, that bachelorhood on an extremely limited income had its drawbacks. Those, she concluded upon further reflection, were not as inconvenient as an innate self-respect that could not be eradicated, and prevented any possibility of a course of the fleshpots of Egypt which one or two of *ses amis* would willingly have provided. And, having been brought up in a land of milk and honey, Miss Stuyvesant had a full knowledge of their delectability, of which a later experience of bread and water had taught her a fuller appreciation. She thumped one of the cushions irritably and crushed the light out of her cigarette. She wanted conventionality. With a keen sense of the extraordinariness of it she realized that what most women were satiated with she wanted with all her soul. But she also admitted, honesty being one of her most marked characteristics, that she desired it only because it would come in the guise of a new sensation, the years that she had had it being those of her childhood. And though Miss Stuyvesant was yet under thirty, circumstances had been such that the last six years of her life had been very crowded. She was tired of situations, and "affairs." She wanted a humdrum existence—to interview a cook

and give orders to a housemaid. But domesticity had been impossible because she would have it only on the condition that she should change it at any time for her old freedom. And such an arrangement had been impossible, for, with domesticity, she stipulated respectability.

With an impatient exclamation she jumped up and lighted a fragrant pastille. The room was strong of cigarette smoke and one could never tell who might come in. And all the world did not know that she indulged in tobacco. Part of it regarded her as a very philosophic young woman who had made the best, and a very laudable best, of a most trying position. The rest decided that she lacked the courage of her convictions. Two such diametrically opposed opinions at least showed her versatility.

The thought made her smile and a second later frown. She clasped her hands high above her head, and the flowing, lacy sleeves of her negligée slipped down to her shoulders. She wanted the moon—with the condition that when its possibilities were exhausted, it should be returned to the skies. But even those who could put it into her outstretched hands could not later restore it to the original position. It was a case of "they would if they could, but they couldn't." Outwardly she acquiesced; inwardly she resolved to have it. "Sufficient unto the day"—when she was tired of green cheese she trusted to find a way of disposing of it. The present question was not how to get rid of it, but by just what means she should possess it.

A rap at the door interrupted her thoughts, and, without moving, she turned her head and waited. A half smile lighted her face as she remembered the "out" card on the other side of the door that

was confronting the visitor. With her eyes on the little slit, she waited. Even when the knock came a second time it only made her shake her head slowly. But, when a card was thrust through the slit, she tiptoed quickly over, while footsteps on the other side retreated, and, reading it hastily, sniffed the atmosphere before opening the door to call:

"Mr. Grosvenor!"

She stood with hand cordially extended as the man came back, and her face was animated with the smile she reserved for him alone, he thought. Had friends intimated to him that his bliss was that of ignorance, he would have retorted that this supposed wisdom was folly. None but the old philosophers could hear themselves called fools with perfect equanimity. Therefore, Mr. Grosvenor's friends thought their own thoughts, wherein they were but ordinary mortals, but kept them to themselves, thereby proving themselves most extraordinary.

Miss Stuyvesant had closed the door.

"Take off your coat, so," she said. "I'm awfully glad to see you."

"In spite of being 'out'?"

"I am 'out'—of sorts! Very much so. When I saw your card I knew you were just what I wanted, and needed," she added, lingeringly.

The woman had thrown herself down on the divan. One of the cushions was redolent of cigarettes, and she tucked it leisurely under the others. Grosvenor left his chair, and, seating himself beside her, took one of her hands and stroked it gently.

"It is sweet to know you wanted me, dear."

"Is it? But I want so many things, you know—so many."

"There are few that you may not have."

Miss Stuyvesant drew away her hand impatiently and clasped both under her head.

"So you always say, and you mistake. I can, but I may not. That is it. To have them I must have you, and I don't want you!"

Grosvenor winced as though she had struck him.

"Jean!"

She put her hand on his shoulder, regretfully.

"Ah, forgive me! Do you know why I don't want you? Only because I will not ruin your life. In a way I care for you very much; if I did not I would marry you to-morrow."

"That is a strange thing to say," Grosvenor said, coldly. "If you loved me, you would marry me."

"If I loved you as other women love, I should. But I do not. Do you want to know something? I can't love. I'm not made that way. I see it in other women and in men, too. If it is directed toward me, it repels me. I'm not a woman. I'm just a freak of nature."

"You are a woman—a large-hearted, beautiful woman," the man asserted.

"Hm!" with an exasperating exclamation of denial. "You *think* you know. I *know*. I'm more of a devil than a woman. I'm bad, lacking in principle straight through."

"Be still," Grosvenor commanded, sternly. "If you were a man I should knock you down, and if you were another woman I'd tell her to her face, as I do you now, that she lied!"

"Well, in a way, she would," Miss Stuyvesant said, with an approving nod—"according to Archbishop Whitely. You remember his definition of a lie? A wilful misstatement of a material fact told to a person who had the right—mark 'the right'—to know the truth. Now you have no right"——

"I will not have you talk so. You make yourself out totally unprincipled with as much calmness as though you were discussing the weather. You are good—good!"

"I'm bad—bad!" she mimicked.

Grosvenor put his hands on her shoulders and stood over her, threateningly.

"One of these days you will make me lose my self-control. I've been rather proud of it, so far, with you. Heaven knows you've tried me enough. Be careful!"

The woman raised her brows nonchalantly.

"No, I trust you! Before you would destroy my confidence you would kill yourself."

"God help me, it is true," the man groaned. "I wonder if a woman ever knows, ever thinks, how a man who loves her could take her in his arms and crush her to death—force her into doing his will just by sheer superior strength?"

"Yes, she knows. She remembers. But she knows that the greater his strength and the more conscious he is of it, the less he would use it. That is what chivalry is—the domination over the brute side by the spiritual toward objects that are weaker."

Grosvenor's hands dropped to his side.

"You are right," he said, "and because of your weakness your strength is ten times greater than mine!"

Miss Stuyvesant drew a long sigh of relief, none the less sincere for being noiseless. The moment had been critical, but was passed in safety.

"If I could make you see me as I am, I should be glad," she said slowly—"yes, glad, even though you despised me. You think an ideal is the real me. You believe me to be strong and brave and good.

Instead I am cowardly, and that gives me the semblance of goodness."

"It is not so!"

"Yes, it is. Do you know what I want? I want the world, the whole world, with everything that that means!" She stretched out her arms as though to grasp it. "I want the fleshpots of Egypt, with the dancing girls about me as I eat. I want admiration, men, music, pretty gowns, brilliant lights, and gay surroundings! It is like a fever—a fever, I tell you, that runs in my veins instead of blood!" She sprang to her feet and stood at her full height, towering over Grosvenor as he sat.

"You can have them," he said quietly.

"Yes, I can have them," she went on rapidly, "but before all else—above all else—I must have freedom! I had rather spend my life here, in this one room, knowing that there was no one to question me, no one to say me 'nay,' than to have the wealth of all the Russias and be asked what time I was coming home. I think I should choke with rage if any one had the right to tell me I might not do a thing! No, no. The price I should have to pay for the world would be more than it is worth to me. For a while I could endure it, but after a bit I should go mad and try to stick a knife in the man while he slept!"

"Jean!"

"Ah, you are beginning to see me as I am? Well, I'll show you more! I've had all those things offered me; all the pretty gowns, and gay surroundings, and music that I want; an establishment and my maid! And with them all I was to keep my freedom—to be as untrammelled as I am now. Do you understand?"

"But you didn't take them!" the man exclaimed eagerly.

"No, I didn't take them." Miss Stuyvesant was still standing, and, with her head thrown back, regarded Grosvenor almost defiantly as she smiled scornfully. "Why? Because," she went on deliberately, "I was such a coward! If I had been courageous I should have taken them, for I wanted to. Just heaven, how I wanted to! But I was afraid of public opinion. I am too thin-skinned to endure being looked at askance, or cut, I am too weak to stand up bravely and say: "Yes, I did it, and I'm glad—glad!" All the light I had about me would only serve to show the eyes that looked at me without seeing; all the music would be but a warning as to where I was that I might be avoided. My gay gowns would be seen by women only that theirs should be different. No, I didn't take what was offered me, and the women in the street are more deserving of respect than I am, for they, at least, have the courage of their desires! Now do you call me good?" she asked sneeringly.

"Why do you tell me this?" Grosvenor demanded.

"So that you will know me as I am." She dropped down on the divan and hid her face in the cushions, with her arms above her head. "Now go."

"I have something to say first. You asked me if I call you good. Yes, and yes again! If you were not good you would not have told me what you did. If you were not good you would not want me to know you as you believe yourself to be. I do not say as you 'are,' you notice. If you were not good—why," he broke off, "I could tell you a dozen things that would prove that you are good!"

"I cannot make you understand," the woman said, despairingly, raising her face.

Grosvenor drew her head on his knee, and stroked her head slowly.

"I understand it all better than you do," he said, gently. "You were brought up and trained to the surroundings you want now, and for years you have been starved for them. You have fought a brave fight, but it has been a fight, and you have found that self-preservation is Nature's first and most difficult law. But because you have succeeded in keeping it in the face of temptations that have been almost constant—temptations for the things you desire as naturally as you crave warmth—your very success has so distorted your mind that you think your desire is sin, and your control of it, selfishness!"

"That is sophistry!" Miss Stuyvesant exclaimed. "I am deceitful. Before you came in I was smoking. If there had been any trace of it I should not have seen you. I know you disapprove of women smoking."

"I dislike it," he corrected. "Yes, you are deceitful, but your honesty is greater or you would not have admitted the deception."

"What am I going to do?" she said, hopelessly. "Nothing is worth while. I only get up in the morning to go to bed again at night. I entertain and amuse people, and they ask me to their houses—their great, warm houses, filled with beautiful things—just as they have any other attraction. And I go! Oh, yes, I go, and bask in the luxury of it all—of a maid to take off my things, and a man about my chair at dinner. I take long breaths, and drink it all in, and I look at the hostess who owns it, who is a part of it, and a great wave of envy sweeps over me. I could shriek aloud, until I remember the host, and that, although the woman presides, he owns her as he does his house or his horses. She can do nothing that really runs counter to him; in all things important she must conform to his ideas.

And as I remember, I, in my second-hand gown, and poverty and loneliness, even I exult, and come happily home. Home!" she repeated, mockingly.

"Jean," the man said, slowly, "I will give you all those and leave you free if you will marry me."

"No, I could not take everything from you without giving what I had in return. For a while I could do it; but afterward"——

"If there were only some way, dear."

Miss Stuyvesant laid her hand over her eyes, and Grosvenor looked at her silently. Down in the street a harp and violin were playing a popular air, and vendors were hawking cheap fruit. The woman frowned.

"You don't have discordant cries like that in your part of town, do you!" she exclaimed, with her eyes still covered. "That is where I want to go. I've thought of a way."

"Have you, dear?"

"Yes. It is Quixotic, but the only one."

"Tell me!"

"Do you want to marry me?"

"As I never before wanted to marry any other woman in God's world," he said, solemnly.

Miss Stuyvesant laid her hand on his a moment, and getting up, went to the other side of the room, and stood tightly clasping a chair-back.

"I will marry you on this condition, and this only —that at the end of a year you will divorce me."

"Jean, are you out of your mind?"

"Not at all!"

"But it would be impossible."

"Not unless you made it so. At the end of the year I could go to Dakota, or wherever women go to get divorces, and live there until I got mine. You could go to Europe, don't you see, and I could

sue for desertion. I shouldn't lose caste nowadays for just being divorced, and you wouldn't be hurt at all. At the end I should be free to go back to the old life."

"Or to marry another man," Grosvenor added bitterly.

"Possibly, but it is rather unlikely that I should find two men similarly accommodating!"

"No, one fool of such colossal proportions would crowd another off the earth."

"You refuse, then?"

"No, but no man is in a hurry to write himself down an ass."

"Am I to understand that you agree?"

"If you understand as little as I do we're both at sea."

"Then we're in the same boat. But I have a chart and compass aboard."

"Which are useless unless you know how to navigate," Grosvenor said grimly.

"I've steered my own bark so far."

"But not to harbor, for you're still at sea."

"I'm trying to make port now, with land in sight."

"Strange territory, dear, and once there to put out again requires skilful managing of a frail craft."

"Be sensible," Miss Stuyvesant urged.

"Sensible!" Grosvenor murmured.

"I have made you a proposition which you may accept or refuse. Really, I shouldn't care much which. To tell the truth, I don't care much about anything!"

"Don't, dear," the man said sharply; "I want to make you care"——

"You can't do it," the woman broke in quickly.

"Don't delude yourself into thinking that you can. For a time I could pretend, but not long. Well, do you think the game would be worth the candle?"

"Will you give me five minutes to decide?"

"Five hours! Go away if you like and come back."

"No, I prefer to stay here." Grosvenor rose as he spoke and began pacing the floor. Miss Stuyvesant knelt down by the window, and resting her chin on her hands looked out into the street. The vendors and musicians had gone away, and a pack of rollicking terriers were playing in front of a stable. She watched them idly, wishing she were among them. If Grosvenor took her she would have some dogs. Those she could keep after she left him. When one was tired of dogs they could always be shut up. They had distinct advantages over people.

Grosvenor touched her.

"Suppose, just for the sake of argument, that if you married me you grew to care for me. What then, when the year was finished?"

"The mere fact that I was married to you, and the eminently proper thing was to love you, would prevent my contrary spirit from accomplishing it," she said flippantly. "Let it go. I retract my proposition. It isn't worth while."

"I do not want you to say that! Suppose"—Grosvenor hesitated—"suppose there should be a child?"

Miss Stuyvesant shuddered.

"There couldn't be," she said quickly. "There couldn't be anything so horrible, so unnatural as that?"

"It would not be unnatural."

"No? Well, if there was one, probably I should love it dearly and keep it myself!" she exclaimed,

with a bewildering change of mind. "Nothing you could possibly do would make me give it up."

"But might you not then be willing to stay with me?"

"No, no! Help me up." Grosvenor raised her and kept her hands in his. "It would be for a year—even for less time, if you wanted."

"Jean, why do you propose this monstrous thing?"

"Why? Perhaps I am insane. I am certainly not normal. And I'm sick unto death of my life and everything in it," she said, vehemently. "I want a change. But to the day I die I shall want change. That is why I will not bind myself to you for all time. I must have variety—something different, something new," she went on, feverishly, "and when everything in life is exhausted there will still be death to try!"

Grosvenor put his hand over her mouth.

"Hush! I am going to take you at your word. I want you to marry me for a year. At the end of it I will release you and do whatever is possible that you may have your divorce in all honor to yourself. Probably I am mad to do it, but a month of heaven with you would be worth a life of hell afterward. How soon will you marry me?"

"Let me think. Next week there is the Devonshires' dinner and I do not want to miss that. But the week after, if you like," the woman said, calmly.

"If I like! Two weeks from to-day, then. You will not change your mind between now and then?"

"Oh, no!" Miss Stuyvesant assured the man indifferently. "Two weeks from to-day I will marry you as quietly as possible."

Grosvenor drew her to him and kissed her passionately as she lay passively in his arms.

* * * * * * *

Miss Stuyvesant's friends congratulated her very sincerely upon her marriage and heard the news with very little surprise. They had seen such remarkable changes in her life that this seemed but a fitting climax, and they expressed themselves as delighted that she was settled in a home with her bohemian existence over forever. Jean heard their comments with an untranslatable smile that qualified her for relationship to the Sphinx, and lived every moment to the utmost of her energies. It was noticeable that she issued more invitations than she accepted, and was more often the hostess than a guest. The women told her it was delightful to see a young woman so appreciative of her own home, to which Jean remarked that there was every reason why she should be.

When the New York season ended, Mr. and Mrs. Grosvenor took a party down to their bungalow in Florida for a month, and among the men none was more devoted, more in constant attendance upon Mrs. Grosvenor than her husband. One of the girls told Jean, laughingly, that Mr. Grosvenor acted as though his wife would not last.

"Nothing does, don't you know!" Jean said. "By the end of a year it will be different."

"Probably," the young cynic agreed, cheerfully.

From Florida the Grosvenors went to the hills for a few weeks and then on to Newport, where Mrs. Grosvenor kept the pace she had started in New York. By the end of the season she was looking like a wreck, and an old friend of her mother's begged Grosvenor to make her stop for a while. He remonstrated with his wife and said that she was killing herself.

"What difference does it make," she remarked,

coldly, "whether Time or Society kills me? There is only one more month in the year."

Her husband said nothing more.

Two weeks later the doctor stopped to see him to ask if he did not realize that his wife's condition was growing delicate, and that she must be made to husband her strength for the trial in store. Grosvenor suppressed the almost involuntary start, and after a talk with the doctor went to his wife.

"Why did you not tell me?" he asked.

"What?"

"What Dr. Morrison has just told me."

She turned scarlet.

"I did not want to. In two weeks I shall be my own mistress. What happens after to me is my affair."

"It is, indeed," Grosvenor said, bitterly. "We have nearly finished the game and the candle is not even wax—nothing more than a tallow dip."

"I warned you that the price would be large for the pleasure."

"It was worth it—worth it all!" the man exclaimed vehemently. "Though you don't know what love is; though you are simply an image in flesh and blood, yet you have been mine, mine, and you will be the mother of my child, though I have not the faintest claim upon it. Well, we're about at the end. I'm going up to town to-morrow to engage my passage to Liverpool. At the same time I will get some money and bring you enough to cover your living expenses and suit for divorce. I won't deposit it for you, for any collusion between people suing for a divorce renders it invalid."

"You are leaving no loophole open," Mrs. Grosvenor said.

"I gave you my word of honor that I would set

you free," he answered, and, turning to leave the room, did not see her open her lips impulsively to speak and then close them silently as he went through the door.

Recent burglaries among the cottages had made Mrs. Grosvenor nervous, and a week later, when her husband went up to New York, she insisted upon having a revolver by her bed. Knowing her to be a good shot, and willing to humor her, Grosvenor gave his wife his own.

Speaking of it afterward, people said the tragedy was, if possible, heightened by her having been killed by her husband's weapon. For going into Mrs. Grosvenor's room one morning, the maid saw the bed stained with a crimson streak, and, calling for assistance, it was found that Mrs. Grosvenor was dead from being shot in the side, the bullet having passed through the lung and heart. The revolver was still on a chair by the bed, and the only explanation was that she had touched it accidentally in her sleep and the self-cocking trigger had snapped. Any theory of suicide was absurd, on the face of it, for a woman who was as satisfied as she had been and who had such a brilliant and happy future.

The Romancer.

A TECHNICAL ERROR.

"You are charged with being a pickpocket," said the magistrate to the prisoner.

"Then I can prove I'm not guilty, your honor," replied the latter, "for the officer says he saw me snatch the purse out of the lady's hand!"

The Pettifogger.

THE EARLY BIRD.

MRS. WILLET—Does your husband come home for his meals?

MRS. SO—He is always here in time for his breakfast.

The Night Owl.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

"AND is this your maiden effort at pastry making?" asked her husband's friend as he sampled a piece of pie.

"Oh, no," replied she, blushingly, "I had been married quite a while before I made that."

The Chump.

ETERNAL VIGILANCE.

"HE'S a smart fellow."

"What's he done?"

"He's lived in Brooklyn for years and never been in an accident."

The Motorman.

WORSE OFF THAN EVER.

JASPER—What can a man do to stop a woman's talking?

JUMPUPPE—Kiss her. A woman can't talk and kiss at the same time.

JASPER—I tried that plan, but it is no good. It only made my wife talk more. She acted as if I were putting a premium on her conversation.

The Benedict.

TO THEM ALL.

A TOAST! to the eyes that mock us,
  In the juice of the vine-clad Rhine,
    The imprisoned soul,
    Of the pilgrim's goal,
  The milk from the Lieb Frau's shrine.
A toast, to the eyes that mock us,
  In the juice of the vine-clad Rhine!

Here's to marble neck and bosom?
  In the vintages of Chablis,
    The Parian shrine
    Of love divine,
  And the heart of constancy—
Here's to marble neck and bosom
  In the vintages of Chablis!

A health to the arms that hold us!
  In the Burgundy's purpling red,
    To tawny tresses,
    To sweet caresses,
  To the highways lovers tread.
A health to the arms that hold us
  In the Burgundy's purpling red!

Once more, to the lips that lure us!
  In the riotous, wild champagne;
    Once more to the bliss
    Of each languorous kiss
  And passion's exultant reign.
Once more to the lips that lure us
  In the riotous, wild champagne!

Quaff deep to the throbbing heart-beat!
In the brandy's liquid flame;
To the pulsing flood
Of the warm, red blood
That drowns the weak voice of shame.
Quaff deep to the throbbing heart-beat!
In the brandy's liquid flame.

Pledge the warm, red lips of pleasure!
In the lees of the wine of pain;
To the molten fire
Of love's fierce desire,
To innocence madly slain!
Pledge the crimson lips of pleasure
In the lees of the wine of pain!

The Mocker.

OVER A CHAFING-DISH.

She's up to date from head to heel,
Can sing French chansons, pay a debt;
She'd do a "century" on her wheel,
Then dance the night out on a bet;
Keeps her appointments dry or wet;
Looks fetching in a riding-habit.
How do I know, when we've not met?
I watched her, one night, make a "rabbit."

She swims and paddles, rows and sails;
She's just as tanned as she can get;
She dotes on golf, and never fails
To be the leader in her set;
Yet in a stately minuet
Her hand's so small you want to grab it.
How do I know, when we've not met?
I watched her, one night, make a "rabbit."

The Logician.

MAKING UP THE GREAT SUNDAY "WORLD."

SUPERNATURAL DRAMA IN ONE ACT

Dramatis Personæ:

EX-HON. JO-JO PHEW! SCHNITZER, Owner of a fine piece of property.

IMMORRILL PLODDARD, An assistant of the deepest dye.

KNASTISS TUFF, Journalist of the modern school.

VULGH ARNOYES, Minstrel of the modern school.

Chorus of Sunday *World* ARTISTS.
Chorus of innumerable REVOLTING HORRORS.
SCENE—Office of the great Sunday *World.*
TIME—Middle of last week.

OPENING CHORUS BY REVOLTING HORRORS.

Oh, we're loathsome and horrible creatures,
And we're regular Sunday *World* features;
Oh, we reek and we smell
Of the vapors of hell,
And we're symbols of lies and effront'ry.
Among us there's great competition
To get into that Sunday edition,
But we get there in time,
And the trail of our slime
Is carried all over the country.

(*Movement. A trio of snakes crawls forward and sings, suiting the action to the word:*)

The first bites the tail of the second,
  The second the tail of the third,
The third by the first is then beckoned
  To grab the first's tail like a bird.

And when these directions we follow,
  A sort of a circle we make,
Then, giving the order to swallow,
  Each tries to devour the next snake.

And as we all slimily guzzle
  Each other with serpentine force,
The effect may appear as a puzzle,
  But that's not the purpose, of course.

The primary point is to frighten—
  To terrify, startle and scare,
If possible, also to whiten
  Each reader's unfortunate hair.

For we're loathsome and horrible creatures,
And we're regular Sunday *World* features, etc.

(*Sickening dance by* REVOLTING HORRORS. *Suddenly footsteps are heard outside the office.* IMMORRILL PLODDARD *enters.*)

SOLO—PLODDARD.

Oh, my name's Immoral Ploddard,
  And for many years I've foddered
Those who yearn to buy their brain food on a Sunday;
  If the kind for which they're lusting
  They prefer to be disgusting,
They shall have it all the more upon that one day.
  For the papers of the week
  Are absurdly mild and meek!

(*Chorus, during which the singer performs a toe-step, in which he is joined by the* REVOLTING HORRORS.)

For I *am* the Sunday editor—(*tippety-tipty-tip*)
Oh, I *am* the Sunday editor—(*tippety-tipty-tip*)
Yes, I *am* the Sunday editor
Of the New York *World;*
I have no use for the abuse
Which is upon me hurled! (*tippety-tipty-tip.*)

I am paid enormous wages
To adorn the Sunday pages
With a lot of wild and horrid illustrations;
And each story that is printed
Must be spattered, smeared and tinted
With some pictures of forbidding malformations.
And fat boys (with diagram)
We'll produce *ad nauseam.* (*Chorus.*)

Now this plan has been successful,
For it's turned out most distressful
To the reader with a doubtful constitution,
And next week we hope to sicken
Him and cause his brain to thicken
By a masterpiece of shuddersome pollution!
There is truth, too, in the rumors
That we're going to publish tumors. (*Chorus.*)

(*Enters* KNASTISS TUFF.)

TUFF—Here's a most disgusting article I wrote to meet your pleasure,
'Tis "The Secrets of the Skin and Cancer Hospital Disclosed."

PLODDARD—Well, the title seems to indicate the article's a treasure,
So we'll have it illustrated with the details all exposed.

(*Exit* KNASTISS TUFF *and enter* VULGH ARNOYES.)

ARNOYES—Here's a meaningless and trashy song I
wrote to meet your pleasure.
All the words are slush—of tune there's none, but
does that matter? No!
PLODDARD—No, indeed, that means prosperity, and
everybody says your
Songs are getting crazier, but that is why they go!

(*Exit* VULGH ARNOYES.)

INVOCATION—PLODDARD.

Ye Sunday *World* artists who draw out of gear
Appear—appear—appear!
Don't let what you're doing just now interfere
With obedience; hasten, or find me austere—
Appear—appear—appear!

(*Enter* ARTISTS.)

ARTISTS— We're here!

CHORUS—ARTISTS.

At your call we come!
We are very bum,
And make folks with any sense ill!
What is it you want?
Give us something gaunt
Whereon each may yield his pencil!
Tell us your desire,
For we all aspire
To obey your slightest wishes;
Let us draw or paint
Something full of taint—
What care we for critics' "Pishes?"
Tell us to instil
With the limner's skill

In the terrified beholder
What will make him howl—
Something gross and foul,
Causing goose-flesh on his shoulder!

(*Out-of-drawing dance by* ARTISTS. PLODDARD *gives them directions for further pen and ink night-mares. They listen with respectful attention and then exeunt giving him three cheers. As soon as they have gone a loud noise is suddenly heard; the wall opens; the odor is stifling; a cloud of miasmatic gas gushes from the opening; it gradually resolves itself into the person of the* EX-HON. JO-JO PHEW! SCHNITZER. *He makes a characteristic hungario-polo-jerusalematic gesture and the fissure closes.*)

PHEW! SCHNITZER (*rubbing his hands*—Rredooz selleries! I'fe pin listenin' pehint ter door, Plottut, unt I heert all uppout how you maig up ter paber! Ah, you vos joost ter kint of felly I likes to haf vork for ter creat Sunty *Vairldt!* There vos no-poty your ekeval, ain't ut? Neffer leaf me, Plottut, neffer leaf me, unt I svear py Chiminy Apraham I'll rredooz your sellery not more ez oncet a month! Unt look here, I gif you a bresent of a yachd for yourselluf, unt you can pay me pack on ter installment plan, ain't ut?

PLODDARD—Oh, that is indeed generous of you, sire! Let us lift up our voices in song!

DUET—PLODDARD AND PHEW! SCHNITZER.

PLODDARD—
Oh, here's to the health of the Great Sunday *World*,
With pictures repulsive—unsightly!
May the mind of the person who sees 'em be twirled
Convulsively, daily and nightly!

PHEW! SCHNITZER—
Und here is Teath unter der *Sun* und der *Hairldt*—
  Der *Chournal* und all other pabers!
Dey none off dem ekeval der Creat Suntey *Vairldt*,
  Mid its gurious guttings off cabers!

BOTH—
The health—the health—the health—the health
Der helluth, der helluth, der helluth, der helluth
  Of the Sun—day *World!*
  Off der Sun—ty *Vairldt!*

(PHEW! SCHNITZER *and* PLODDARD *fall into each other's arms and coalesce into a distorted whirlpool of vapor midst the hissings, spittings, splutterings and rattlings of the* REVOLTING HORRORS *and the different personifications of Rottenness, Mustiness, Putridity and Rancidity characteristic of the office of the great Sunday* "*World.*")

CURTAIN.

The Librettist.

JEANNETTE.

SHE somehow makes me understand,
While holding in my own her hand,
  The things she does not say;
And all her store of woman's guile,
With every trick of frown or smile,
  She bringeth into play.

Such visions in her eyes I see,
That, being but a man, to me
  It scarcely seemeth fair;
She knows right well, the dear coquette,
What I am thinking of, and yet
  She knows I do not dare.

The Timid One.

ROLLO AT GOLF.

A STORY FOUNDED UPON REMINISCENCE.

CHAPTER I.

"UNCLE GEORGE," said Rollo in his Constantinople voice, "I have become much interested in what I hear about the game of golf."

"That shows that you are far from well," replied Mr. George. "For I have been in Scotland upon several sad occasions, and I know for an absolute fact that golf—like poetry—is a disease, pure and simple, or rather, simple; there is nothing pure about it, for as a school for profanity and an incentive to Scotch whisky—real old John Dewar"——

"What is the difference between Scotch whisky and white man's whisky?" said Rollo, who was always unmercifully licked for interrupting people larger than himself.

"The difference," replied Mr. George thoughtfully and far away, as he stroked the purple end of his nose into a beautiful sunset red, "the difference is this," and he drew from a bundle of receipted bills a paper which was docketed on the back, "Keeley, '95."

"Oh," said Rollo, with a knowing wink, "and it didn't do any good either!"

"Eyther, if you please; it is vastly more English," said Mr. George with much dignity.

"But we should try to be Scotch at present," in-

sisted Rollo with some heat. "What with the 'Bonnie Brier Bush' and the Duke of Argyle (God bless him!) and the 'Stickit Minister' and all the rest of the misery, it isn't really decent not to wear kilts, or play the bagpipes, or eat porridge, or play golf, or do something or other that is uncomfortable and that you hate to do, but which is Scotch and, oh, such good form, don't you know! And, if you will pardon my speaking plainly (here Rollo gave his best Dodworth bow), I would, with all respect, remind you that you are getting a trifle *passé* and behind the times; croquet is over with, but you haven't found it out, also"——

"Hush!" said Mr. George. "And permit me to ask why you are like our defeated candidate, Mr. Bryan?"

"That is too easy," replied Rollo, with an English sneer; "and permit me, in turn, to ask why is an unrented house in Brooklyn like a"——

"Stop!" screamed Mr. George. "I fear that you are getting much too old to have a governess any longer. You may go, sir."

And so Rollo went to his boudoir, and wrote the following note upon his typewriter, addressing it to Mr. George:

"DEAR NUNKY: I am just leaving for a few weeks at Newport. Shall stop with my old friend Mrs. Montgomery. Shall hope to see you there.

"Yours,
"MAUD."

Rollo then wrote another letter to a New York newspaper, stating that the Earl of Gilcoonan and his son from Auchmagillycuddy, Aberdeenshire, would shortly arrive in New York and stop at the Waldorf. Then still another letter to the manager

at the Waldorf, asking him to forward all mail for the Earl of Gilcoonan to him (Rollo) at his home in Bergen Point. These letters Rollo got a friendly brakeman to mail for him in New York. Then he sat down and waited four days.

At the end of this time Mr. George had come to the conclusion that the severe coughing fit which attacked him every morning made it necessary for him to have a change of air, and that Newport would, in all probability, be the best place. Whereupon Rollo explained to him his scheme, and showed him the letters which he had just received from the Waldorf, all of them being invitations from distinguished Newport people begging the Earl of Gilcoonan and his son to visit them at Newport and stay as long as they could, etc., etc.

Mr. George opened his eyes wide with astonishment at the fertility of resource which Rollo had displayed, and agreed with him in thinking that every advantage should be taken of the great opportunities which were offered to them.

It was necessary, however, in the first place, to assume and carry out in detail the characters of Scotch noblemen, so a hurried trip was made to New York, where Mr. George, Rollo, and Jonas, were fitted out with Tam o'Shanters, kilts, stockings, claymores and all the rest of the uncomfortable costume of the Highlander, together with a full outfit of golf implements and a set of bagpipes for Jonas.

A rapid reading of William Black's alleged novels was then indulged in, and a number of Scotch expressions were memorized, such as Hoot, mon! Gang awa! Dinna fash yersen! etc., etc. And then, all being ready, and one of the Newport invitations having been duly accepted, they put on their cos-

tumes and, with their golf clubs slung over their shoulders and Rollo's gold fish in a preserve jar, set sail for America's leading watering places.

They naturally created quite a sensation as they proceeded on their journey, and they also suffered considerably from chilliness of the knees; and Rollo found great difficulty in keeping his stockings up. However, in the course of time they reached Wickford Landing, and, the bay being very smooth, the steamer *General de Kay* was able to cross over to Newport without a mishap.

"The circus has come!" screamed a small ragamuffin as our party stepped ashore, and an elderly policeman proceeded to arrest the urchin as soon as he learned the visitors were noblemen, for Newporters adore the foreign aristocracy. The footmen, in correct livery, met our adventurers and stowed them away in a gorgeous landau, and then they were driven to the palatial residence of their host with eight newspaper reporters "cutting behind."

CHAPTER II.

THE manner in which Newport's summer colony goes down on its knees to any and all foreign noblemen is a subject too old and hackneyed for us to touch upon here, and it is enough to say that the Earl of Gilcoonan and his son received the customary adulation and fêting, did exactly what they pleased, and whatever they did was pronounced the correct thing, and even Jonas had a good time driving people crazy with his bagpipe practice and licking his host's butler and footmen when he felt like it.

A few days after the Earl's arrival, a terrific north-

easterly storm broke over Newport, and the Earl's host pronounced it such grand golfing weather—weather so perfectly Scotch, in fact—that it would be really criminal to neglect it and stay indoors. Rollo hastened to back up his host, and second the motion for golf, and Mr. George finally yielded, saying that it certainly was a "braw dee for a game o' guf." And so they took a cab and drove out through the rain and wind to the country club.

They found the club-house, externally, an imposing structure, designed upon the lines of a three-legged stool. One of its three wings, however, appeared to have shaken hands at some period with a cyclone and had lost its roof and most of its digestive apparatus in the process. Internally, the house was found to consist of a bar-room, and a ball-room, although the balls were usually given in the bar-room, and in addition, it was learned that a gale of wind always swept through the building at an eighty-mile-an-hour gait, which made locomotion difficult, and only a strong man could open or close a door. In fact, as Jonas remarked, if they could only get the draught cashed at a bank they would be rich for evermore.

Mr. George, feeling chilly about the knees, hastened to investigate the bar and appeared to find things very satisfactory, and said that he was glad he had come.

A professor of golf now took charge of our party and hurried them out of doors, for, as he said, the weather was so Scotch and so perfect for golfing that it was a shame to waste a moment of it.

"There are the links," he began, waving his hand toward a wall of rain and fog.

"The lynx, you remember," said Mr. George to Rollo, "is a four-footed animal belonging to the

felinus asparagatus family. I am very glad that you should have this opportunity to derive practical benefit from your long study of natural history." And Mr. George glanced longingly back toward the bar-room.

The professor, however, would not tolerate further delay, and proceeded to lead them to the rear of the club-house, passing the basement where the Kosher meat is prepared. Here they found a small well-worn plateau, in the centre of which the professor, with great solemnity, proceeded to make a little pyramid of sand, which he said was a "tee."

"But I always take coffee," said Rollo, in a disappointed tone of voice.

"And here are your caddies," continued the professor, as two bedraggled urchins came forward and relieved our party of their golf clubs.

"Tea-caddies, I suppose," said Rollo, while Jonas tried for a psalm tune on the bagpipes and missed it by several miles.

The professor now placed on the top of the tee what looked like a large chocolate cream with the chocolate worn off. "You must now 'address' the ball," he said, solemnly.

"How do you do? I am very glad to meet you. Lovely weather we're having," said Rollo, politely taking his cap off to the ball.

The professor then proceeded to explain that "addressing the ball" consisted in standing a few feet from the tee, with your feet as wide apart as possible, and then, after bidding good-bye to home and mother, you turn completely around, without, however, moving your feet an atom from their original position. You then proceed to unwind yourself, and at the end of the evolution swipe the ball for all you are worth with a club called a "driver," which looks

like a cross between a badly-written musical note and the front leg of a camel.

Rollo was the first to essay this painful experiment, and as his stockings wouldn't stay up and his kilt wouldn't stay down, on account of the wind, he found considerable difficulty in hitting the ball, but at last he succeeded in knocking it a few yards. Mr. George then came up to the scratch and fetched his ball a tremendous crack, sending it away off into the swamp on the left, and then he and the caddie spent half an hour sloshing around in the mud and brush in an attempt to recover it, while Jonas tried to play the "Lost Chord" on the pipes, and Rollo, standing on the edge of the marsh, inquired:

"Where is hell, Uncle George?"

"Right here, my child," replied Mr. George, with considerable feeling.

The professor at last declared that the ball was lost, and then, turning to Rollo, said, "That gives you the hole."

"What hole?" said Rollo, in a spirit of repartee.

"The first hole, of course," replied the professor.

"What will I do with it?" asked Rollo.

"It is necessary for me to inform you," said the professor, with much dignity, "that no hilarity is ever permitted in this game; you must not speak unless it is absolutely necessary, and then not above a whisper. The game, when conducted properly, should be played as though you were going to a burying. We will now proceed to the second tee."

Mr. George paid twenty-five cents for a new ball, and they started off across the sodden fields, and finally came to another little plateau just like the one they had started from. Here they were directed to "drive off" again.

"But why in the name of Sodom and Gomorrah!" asked Mr. George with considerable heat, "why couldn't we have done this at the first croquet grounds instead of travelling away over here? We're getting farther and farther from the bar-room and all for what, I'd like to know?"

"Play the game!" screamed the professor, who was beginning to lose patience. "And mind you keep count of each other's strokes."

So off they started again, ploughing their way through mud and mire, and Mr. George said that he felt certain that the game had been invented by the Wandering Jew and that the poor chap had never been pitied half enough. At last they reached the second "putting green" and the professor asked "how many strokes they had made?"

"I don't remember," said Mr. George.

"And I don't remember, either," said Rollo.

"Then you 'halve' the 'hole,'" said the disgusted professor.

Then they wearily "drove off" once more. "Always the same old thing over again," said Mr. George, "and nothing ever comes of it. The only object in view appears to be to keep travelling for nothing and aggravating yourself all you can. Dash blank the game! The treadmill and chain gang are regular larks beside this bally funeral that don't appear to have any end to it this side of perdition! Whew! But I'm thirsty!"

Tired out, soaked through and through, their knees cut from trying to find balls lost in a stone quarry, they at last landed in a "bunker," and as the high earth bank protected them in a measure from the weather they squatted down in its lee and Mr. George said:

"The nearest approach to anything agreeable in

connection with this game appears to be the getting into a 'bunker.' If I ever have the misfortune to get engaged in this alleged game again, I shall make a bee line for a 'bunker' and stay there till it is time to go home. Jonas, play us a 'pibroch'!"

"I don't know no pibrochs," replied Jonas, sulkily.

"What is a pibroch, uncle?" asked Rollo.

"I have never been able to find out," replied Mr. George, wearily. "I only know that they are always playing them in William Black's novels and that they are exceedingly Scotch and therefore probably as distressing as Scotch weather and the game of golf! Possibly as you are a Scotchman," he continued, addressing the professor, "possibly you can enlighten us?"

"Jumping Judas!" screamed the worn-out professor, "I ain't no Scotchman! I'm from de Bowery and I don't know nothing about pibrochs nor nothing else that's Scotch except this dash blank chasin' of a lost ball all over the face of natcher—what they call the game of golf! Game be blowed! 'Tain't no game! It's the new out-door treatment for insanity—didn't you know that? Game! Lor! King Henry de ate an' Benjamin Franklin an' de bloke wot tinks he's a pair of skates, and all de other loonies, dey comes out here an' goes round an'round de fields like de hands on a clock, thinkin' de whole time dat dey's doin' suthin', an' by night dey's so tired out dat yer can put dem to bed widout straight jackets! It's a heap cheaper nor puttin' 'em in asylums an' a heap better for 'em too, an' I knows wot I'm chinnin' about, fer I worked in Bloomingdale before I kim here, an' it's de livin' troot I'm givin' yer!"

Jonas made a futile effort to restrain a shout of

laughter, Mr. George and Rollo looked blankly at each other, and then without a word they started for town.

CHAPTER III.

JUST as our party arrived on the outskirts of Newport an elderly policeman stopped their cab and said to the occupants:

"You fellows is arrested?"

"What is the charge?" asked Mr. George, with great dignity.

"Travellin' on false pretences; you ain't no dukes!" replied the officer.

"Would you be so very kind as to look away for just one minute while I pull my stockings up?" said Rollo in his sweetest voice.

"Certainly," replied the policeman, and, as he gazed off into space, the cab containing our adventurers drove rapidly away to the water front.

The weather being too rough for the steamer *General De Kay* to cross over to the main land, our party was obliged to make the passage in a catboat, and, fortunately catching the train, they arrived finally in New York.

As they were crossing the Cortlandt Street ferry a very gorgeous young lady with fluffy peroxide blonde hair addressed Mr. George, who seemed rather embarrassed, but pulling himself together, he drew the young lady aside and held a hurried consultation with her, during which he produced the letter which Rollo recognized as the one he had written himself and to which he had signed the name "Maude."

Mr. George shortly returned to Rollo with a cold, hard glitter in his eyes.

"Is that my new governess?" asked Rollo sweetly.

"Permit me to inquire, after the manner of our friend Li Hung Chang, how old you are?" replied Mr. George, suavely.

"Just fifteen," answered Rollo, blushing.

"You are much too old to have a governess and I shall attend to your future education myself," said Mr. George, decidedly.

"The stars are very bright to-night," remarked Rollo, looking up into the sky.

"Yes," replied Mr. George, "there is the dipper"——

"Always up to snuff," interrupted Rollo.

"And there is the Great Bear," continued Mr. George.

"Which is usually in Wall Street," said Rollo.

"And there is Jupiter and his satellites."

"And satellites are sometimes called suckers, and —oh! that reminds me that we left my gold-fish behind!" And Rollo sobbed.

The Old Timer

COMPARATIVE WISDOM.

JUVENIS—But I cannot understand how a man that is as learned as you are can be short of money!

SENEX—Ah! I may know as much as old Solomon did, but not as much as old Solomon Isaacs does!

The Impecuner.

NOT THE RIGHT MAN.

"YES, dear, I had to decline him, because I knew he could never make me a happy woman."

"Why do you think that?"

"He told me he would never live beyond his income even for my sake."

The Economist.

A BOSTON POEM.

A CERTAIN young fellow from France
Attended a wild western dance.
While dancing a figure
His sleeve caught the trigger
And his pistol went off in his pants.

The Plymouth Rocker.

REASON TO BE.

"WHY are you looking so glum?" asked the first author to the second.

"I sent a manuscript to a measly editor, marked 'at your regular rates,' and he sent it back with a schedule of his advertising prices."

The Mourner.

POOR GEORGE.

"DID George, the light of my life, call to-night, pa?"

"Yes, and I guess he was blown out; I gave him a blast."

The Happy Parent.

THE FOLLY OF HER WAYS.

A STORY OF A MAN'S JEALOUSY.

THEY all said that Lady Hope was—well, was behaving in a slightly eccentric way when she allowed Regy Northwick to be in such constant attendance on her. He was—"not exactly the sort of man I should allow to run after my daughter," said a dowager friend, though some one else remarked that it was scarcely surprising, considering that Lord Hope neglected her so much, and divided his time between the British Museum and stuffed birds. But the person who objected most of all was her cousin by marriage, young Joseph Hope. Ever since he had met her, three years ago, he had lavished a great deal of devotion on her, which she had accepted very much as most women accept that sort of thing, until something better or more amusing turns up. He raged inwardly against Mr. Regy Northwick, and when he passed them, one afternoon, sitting together in the Park, he barely lifted his hat and scowled furiously.

"And who is your polite young friend?" queried Regy.

"He's my cousin," said Lady Hope. "He's dreadfully in love with me, poor boy, and horribly jealous."

"Really?" said Regy. "That's nice for him."

"He's absurdly young and most ridiculous," she went on. "His name is Joseph."

"I can't say," remarked Regy, "that I'm particularly interested in Josephs."

"But you ought to be interested. That's what I find fault with you for. Nothing rouses you to enthusiasm. You are wooden, and I hate wooden people."

He gave her an amused little look.

"Possibly. I rather think that I have become gradually petrified by the perpetual drip, drip of society. Have you ever noticed what society does for every one? It models the softer substances into all sorts of shapes—extraordinary, some of them, very—and it petrifies the harder ones. I am one of the latter. I am petrified."

"Do you mean that you really have no feeling—no heart—left?"

"My dear Lady Hope, you are talking like a young lady in her teens. What is heart? Merely the centre of a great system of blood vessels, and—er"——

She stopped him.

"I can't stand anatomy," she said; "it makes me shiver all over. Once I tore the muscle of my arm and the doctor tried to explain all about it. I didn't mind the pain, but I nearly fainted when he tried to dissect me. I'm going home to dine now. We dine early and go to the opera when Mantelli sings, you know. It's the fashion."

"And you do it for the fashion, or the singing, or the diamonds?"

"Diamonds, chiefly, I think. A box shows them off so. Then, because it's fashionable—one must have an audience for the diamonds, you see; and, lastly, because—— Won't you join us there tonight?"

"Thanks, no; I never go to the opera. It gives me no pleasure nowadays. I am proscribed by the relentless laws of that fashion you so highly advo-

cate from sticking diamonds all over my costume, and, therefore "——

"Now you're laughing at me, and—no, you mustn't come any further. I'm late, and I'll drive. You have made me late, you know." She held out her hand, and bestowed on him a little pathetic smile.

"I am charmed to think I have exercised any influence over you." He hailed a cab and carefully put her into it. "I always imagined that would be rather difficult, you know."

She consulted her watch and then bent toward him.

"I want to see you," she said, in a low, hurried voice. "If I—if I had one of my headaches this evening—I have a slight one already—I might be able to stay at home. Can I expect you?"

He raised his hat.

"I will be there," he said.

He watched her drive away with the very faintest suspicion of a smile on his usually grave, apathetic face. When he retraced his steps into the Park, the light of the summer evening seemed to have fled. The sky had clouded over and a dull grayness had settled down on everything, accentuated by the bright scarlet of the geranium beds. But he did not notice his surroundings. He walked on, self-absorbed.

. . . . . .

"I only wanted to warn you against him," said the man, sulkily.

They were at Ascot, and Lady Hope, in the gauziest of summer dresses, was sitting in a club enclosure drinking tea.

"That's so stupid of you, Joseph," she said.

"Oh, of course, I know I'm stupid. Even your husband"—she gave an impatient little movement—"even your husband thinks that, though he trusts me otherwise. He knows you're safe with me when he is poring over his books and stuffed birds at home. And he is quite right. I—I—I would do anything in this world for you. You know that, too, don't you? I—I—but I mustn't speak of it. Frank is a good old chap, and I wouldn't be disloyal to him even in thought. I only want to be your very best friend. A woman whose husband is as much occupied as yours is needs a—a best friend."

She hummed a little tune and looked round as though searching for some one.

"It's hardly complimentary when one's husband prefers stuffed birds to his wife," she said.

"But he doesn't. You know that as well as I do. He"——

Lady Hope turned round and gave Joseph a cold little stare. Lady Hope's cold little stares were things altogether to be avoided.

"We will leave that subject alone, if you please," she said, stiffly. "I suppose I know my own husband as well as you do?"

"Of course"—he stumbled on blindly in his agitation, never realizing how dangerous was the ground he had chosen. "We'll leave that subject alone if you like, if it's sacred." Lady Hope's lip curled a little. "But the other chap, Regy Northwick, I must speak about him. He's not a man of any reputation; he does a woman no good. You've been seen about with him a lot lately, and people will talk if—if nothing worse happens. No, don't look like that—forgive me. I can't help saying all this; but I would shoot that man rather than"——

He stopped abruptly, for Lady Hope was holding

out her hand to some one and greeting him effusively.

"I thought you weren't coming," she was saying.

"I could only get away by a late train," Regy Northwick answered, "and I would not have come then—but for"—— He glanced at the teacup in her hand then at Joseph at her side. "Come and walk about if you've done your tea," he went on; "there's a race just starting."

"I don't care a bit about the race," she replied, rising. "I only care about the frocks and the people. Ta-ta, Joseph, and don't take life too seriously for the future. I did miss you," she explained to her new companion. "I have been boring myself to death with that boy. He's a very good boy—but"——

"That is quite enough to bore one," interrupted Regy. "Goodness always does."

Lady Hope shook out her parasol with a determined little air.

"I am not sure that I agree with you there," she said. "Goodness bores, perhaps, but vice does not always please, if that is what you meant."

"In a way it is. You have guessed my thoughts."

"But condoned them. Remember you and I are not agreed on one subject, anyway."

"Could I," he said, in a low voice, "could I ever forget that?"

Joseph was looking white and haggard, when Lady Hope, with the prettiest little manner possible, came up to him later on and touched him on the sleeve.

"I can't go back with our party," she said. "I've arranged differently. Thanks ever so much for coming down with me, Joseph. And I'll send you a line next time I want you."

"Am I not to fetch you and bring you down the usual time to-morrow?" he stammered out.

"N-n-o, I think not. It is scarcely convenient"——

Forgetful of his surroundings—forgetful of everything save his passionate, useless jealousy, he caught her hand and would have dragged her with him.

"You shall come with me," he exclaimed, "and when we are back in town I shall tell your husband. I won't see your life ruined as it must be if that man has anything more to do with you. You shall come with me, I say."

She pulled her hand away from his, and her only reply was to nod across at Regy Northwick.

"I'm ready," she said to him, then she turned back and whispered to Joseph, "I'll have no more scenes—understand that, now and at all times—and if—if a word of this reaches my husband's ears, I cut you dead, ever after!"

. . . . . .

It was a brilliant Cup Day at Ascot. The sun did his duty splendidly and enhanced the brightness of the scene. Over the refreshment tables in the different enclosures, diminutive punkahs swung backward and forward; there was a delicious sense of summer and luxury and enjoyment in the air.

Lady Hope, closely accompanied by Regy Northwick, bet slightly, coming out chiefly a loser. As she mounted the grand-stand to take her place for the Cup race, she caught sight of Joseph's face, whiter and more haggard than even the day before. She turned away petulantly, and refused to acknowledge his presence. He annoyed her horribly just then.

The race was an intensely exciting one. The finish was run between the horses of a private gentleman and royalty. As the two horses neared the

winning post, a low prolonged murmur, swelling to a roar, rose up from the vast crowd, and when the royal colors swept by first, the roar developed into one long deafening cheer of excitement and delight. It was then that Joseph, who had remained fixed with his eyes on Lady Hope's face, pressed toward her.

"You must speak to me just one word," he whispered.

She turned her shoulder toward him, and for reply whispered something to Regy on the other side.

"You will regret it all your life long if you don't," the boy went on excitedly. "I've made up my mind about it and nothing can deter me from it. It's my duty. But first I want one word from you."

She either did not or would not hear. The cheering had become louder and more deafening than ever, for royalty had gone out to lead his horse into the paddock and hats were being tossed and throats shouted hoarse. Suddenly there was a stir and an outcry in the grand-stand, then two sharp reports in quick succession, followed by the screams of women and a great swaying in the crowd.

Lady Hope staggered forward. She was conscious of a shock; there was a dizziness before her eyes, and she just heard a voice in her ear—it sounded very far away: "I swear I never meant it for you. Before God I never did. I meant it for him. Forgive"—and then she fainted.

. . . . . .

Society and Regy Northwick recovered from the scandal and went their way as before. Poor Joseph Hope, who blew his brains out on that fatal day, was buried and utterly forgotten, and Lady Hope recovered from the slight bullet wound he had inflicted on her, in the strict seclusion of her country

home, whither her husband had accompanied her.

"My dear," she said to him very seriously from her sofa one day, "it seems to me too terrible that a man's life should have to be sacrificed to show a woman the folly of her ways."

Her husband put down his book and looked at her over his spectacles.

"My dear," he said, "I shouldn't worry about it if I were you. I really believe the fault of the whole matter lay in the stuffed birds after all."

The Romancer.

RIVAL CHARMERS.

BROBSON—Guzzles seems convinced that the hair of the dog will *always* cure the bite.

CRAIK—Yes; the only question with him is whether he likes hair or bite best. *The Tippler.*

PROOF.

WILLIS—What do you think of the old way they had of bleeding people?

WALLACE—Must have been something in it. I had much better health before I quit shaving myself.

The Trembler.

SENSITIVE ON THAT POINT.

CUSTOMER—Where do you get your milk?

MILKMAN—You can't pump me.

The Idiot.

FATE'S PRACTICAL JOKE.

THE STORY OF AN HONORABLE MAN.

His cuff-buttons were two joined hearts. When you learn further that he was married, you have his character completely outlined in two swift strokes—like a Japanese picture.

John Fetherell's life had given him just one intimate friend among women. He loved her from the first and to the last, utterly. He was wholly faithful to her in advance of her coming into his life—when she was only a prospective sweetheart. From the time he met her, till he compelled her love and her betrothal, past the time of affiance into the honeymoon, and on through the subsidence into the humdrum of married life, he was altogether faithful to the highest ideal she could have set for him. Nor was this a mere matter of the material fidelity of deeds. Had his wife been able to read even his inmost thoughts, and followed his secret desires, she could have found only unswerving faithfulness. John Fetherell led what we choose to call a narrow life; his creed, though elaborate, was not cosmopolitan. To its lengthy complication of articles, sections, by-laws and amendments he was not only a devout subscriber, but a devout servant. In short, along with complete lack of austerity or Pharisaism, John Fetherell was the incarnation of piety. To him creeds outlined deeds, and deeds creeds. He was a good man.

It was well for his relations with Mrs. John

Fetherell that this was so. She was his autotype in the other sex. She was as tender-hearted as he, as devoted, as faithful, as pious. Like him, she abhorred the idea of a separate standard for the judgment of men and women. Had she reason for believing that the slightest tendency to wander from her existed in her husband's heart, her love for him would not have been wounded; it would have been slain. She would have left his roof at once. She would have thereafter despised him, hated him, and refused him her forgiveness eternally.

The only nights John Fetherell spent away from his own hearth and carpet-slippers were those on which Mrs. John Fetherell and he sallied forth together to prayer-meeting, lecture or neighborly call, and the occasional nights he stayed late and alone at the office, playing hide and seek with his trial balance among labyrinthine figures.

On a certain night that was none of these usual nights he did not come home. Mrs. Fetherell's psychological itinerary went from surprise to wonder, thence to amazement, thence through alarm to panic. Suspicion that he might be kept away by any motive of his own never entered her mind. When she could no longer endure the tormenting pictures of danger and distress drawn by her imagination, she rang for a messenger boy, and had his lilliputian escort down midnight streets to the house of a friend, Deacon Hampton, whom she rang up and told her fears in hysterical accents.

She refused all his suggestions that the delay might be due to any number of ordinary causes. Finally, to quiet her, he telephoned to Police Headquarters. A hint from them and a clue from the Fire Department and a direction from one hospital

to another brought the telephonic sleuth at length by devious ways to the —— Hospital.

Deacon Hampton, toga'd in his bath-robe, was so deeply engrossed in his cross-wire hurdle race that he forgot the presence near him of Mrs. Fetherell, whom his wife, in curl-papers and a wrapper, was trying vainly to restrain from violent weeping. But nothing availed to calm Mrs. Fetherell's sobs till she overheard one end of the conversation Deacon Hampton was carrying on loudly without thought of eavesdroppers.

"Hello! hello!" stormed the Deacon, at an invisible and, to the women, inaudible being.

"Is this the —— Hospital?—Is Mr. John Fetherell there? Oh, he is? Is he seriously injured?—What?—Dead?—How? When? Where?—Found burned to death in —th street. Impossible man, impossible?—What's that? Found dead in the arms of—of whom?—Maggie Hicks! Not the notorious Maggie Hicks?—Nonsense, man, you don't know Mr. Fetherell. You poor fool, you've got the wrong man.—Positive identification, eh? Humph! What is it?—Letters in his pockets and addressed to him?—His coat was found on the floor unburned, eh? It's all a terrible, a silly mistake, I say. Don't in heaven's name let the newspapers get it.—What! the reporters all have it already. You infernal scoundrel you! You vile"—but a sharp ring showed that the man at the other end had cut short the unpleasant trend of the conversation.

Making a tremendous effort at a calm and benevolent hypocrisy the scarlet Deacon turned to Mrs. Fetherell, and murmured tenderly:

"My dear woman, there has been an accident. Your husband is not well, he"——

But Mrs. Fetherell's face was so stern and cold that her lingering tears were as dew upon marble. She dashed them away as if they shamed her, and said in a tone of icy indifference:

"I have heard everything, Mr. Hampton. I understand everything. You cannot deceive me."

"But," interposed the Deacon, on the point of a collapse, "there may be some terrible mistake."

"It is not impossible. To make sure, I shall go at once to the hospital."

And refusing the Deacon's proffered attendance she strode out with the high dignity of Juno hearing some new escapade of Jupiter's. Her knight-errant, the messenger boy, followed.

An old friend of Fetherell's had come down from Boston that afternoon and dragged the protesting husband off to dinner at his hotel. Fetherell had gracefully declined wine at the table. He had also refused an invitation to the theatre, giving other reasons than his conscientious scruples against that "vestibule of hell," the play-house. He had left at about 9 o'clock for home, taking a short cut through the wild and western end of —th street.

In his sublime innocence Fetherell had remained ignorant of the real nature of the inhabitants of this section. The place was an inelegant "Tenderloin," a sort of "Rump Steak," you might say. To be seen entering or leaving that street was to submit oneself to very definite imputations. This the guileless Fetherell knew nothing of. He fared the moral jungle like a virgin knight, a Sir Galahad.

As he passed an apartment-house, whose front door stood most hospitably open, the scream of a woman in terror made icicles of his veins. The other inhabitants of the house were too much inured to the screams of women under the spell of drunk-

enness or delirium tremens, or under the heel of irate lovers, to pay particular attention to this particular outburst. But for good John Fetherell only one course was possible—rescue. He ran lightly up the deserted stairway and, finding the door unlocked, entered the room whence the shrieks rang forth. The sight he saw there threw him back against the door and closed it.

He was in the lair of Maggie Hicks, a girl whose beauty and recklessness had made her name a proverb about town. She was unwontedly alone in her room and she had sat on her bed reading a yellow novel. In her ecstatic attention to the triumph of the heroine's purity over the villain's wiles, she had allowed her forty-fifth cigarette to go out. In relighting it hastily, at a lamp on the table, at her side, she had tipped the frail pharos over into her lap. Her light wrapper and her bed were immediately one blaze.

She leaped from her pyre with a wild shriek and ran up and down the room in a vain panic, like a high-bred, fire-maddened mare. Her motion fanned the blazes to greater fury, and John Fetherell's eyes beheld a serpentine dance of real flames, that out-Loied Loie's fiercest blazes of drapery.

When the tormented girl saw Fetherell she rushed upon him, imploring aid. He whipped off his heavy woollen coat to wrap about her, but she flung her arms around him in a frenzy of torture, and he dropped the coat. He could not tear himself away. As he gasped in furious struggle, his panting lungs took deep draughts of flame. One mad cry had escaped him, and the terror in this, a man's voice, had at last brought aid.

But the people that poured into the room could hardly save their own homes by putting out the

spreading flames. The rugs they threw upon Maggie and her unknown companion covered only two hideous logs of flesh. The two souls were loosed smoke upon the air.

No one had heard Fetherell go up the stairway. Maggie was never intentionally alone. *Voilà tout!* The story the people gave police and ambulance surgeons was not marred with any doubts. Out of formality the bodies were taken to the hospital, but the souls were beyond recapture. The letters found in the discarded coat gave the name and business address of an obscure citizen. Two more calamities for Venus's sake. *Voilà tout!*

. . . . . .

The evidence Mrs. Fetherell found at the hospital —letters, a ring, a watch—removed the last jot of doubt from her outraged heart. She feared that a sight of the dead man might cause a weed of pity to spring up in her perfect contempt for the trickster that had been her husband. She found in his watch a picture of him and of her, lovingly cheek to cheek. She tore it across with a gasp of disgust. Every word he had ever spoken, every protestation of complete fidelity, every appearance of devotion—all the fair ways and deeds that had endeared him now took on a look of cunning duplicity, and became to her heart only the Dead-Sea fruit of hypocrisy. She dashed her handkerchief across her lips to efface the memory stains of his kisses, but felt the attempt as vain as *Lady Macbeth's* much washing of her little white hand.

As Mrs. Fetherell tore out of her heart all trust in mankind and planted eternal cynicism there, Fate held her fat sides for laughter.

As Mrs. Fetherell passed homeward along the

street she flung into the gutter something the surgeon had given her just before she left the hospital. The young hobo that saw the glint of gold and stooped to pick it up found, to his Bacchantic delight, a pair of gold sleeve links: the design, two joined hearts.

The Story Teller.

MY BRIARWOOD.

My briarwood, my briarwood,
  What mem'ries 'round you cluster!
What fancies quaint you love to paint
  With still unfading lustre!
And when you glisten in the rays
  Of softly glowing embers,
What happy scenes from other days
  Your witchery remembers!

My briarwood, my briarwood,
  How oft your sweet beguiling
Has wafted me across the sea,
  To where red lips are smiling!
How oft through rosy wreaths that play
  In curling clouds above you,
I've heard again those red lips say,
  With cadence soft, "I love you."

My briarwood, my briarwood,
  To still my lonely yearning,
Where'er I roam, where'er my home,
  To you I'm ever turning.
I watch your circling azure mists
  So lazily ascending,
And see, oh, Mistress Briarwood,
  Sweet dreams around you blending.

The Pipe-Hitter.

ADVISED.

JACKSON BALL—Sunday night I called on Miss 'Liza an' stayed till 4 o'clock. Monday I stayed till 11, Tuesday and Wednesday till 4, and to-night I'm goin' to——

UNCLE MOSE.—You play 4–11–44, nigger.

The Gambler.

TOO MUCH MENTAL STRAIN.

BANK PRESIDENT—A man tried to forge my signature yesterday.

MRS. BANK PRESIDENT—What asylum did they send him to?

The Scrawler.

TRUST.

"IT was all because I believed him implicitly," sobbed the unhappy girl. "When he told me I was a bird and asked me to fly with him I—I"——

But they knew the rest.

The Pigeon.

NO ALTERNATIVE.

"WHY must you always pursue me?" moaned the distracted heroine.

The villain laughed hoarsely.

"I can't do a thing on the continuous performance circuit," he answered.

The Hamfatter.

GOOD FRIENDS TO VIRTUE.

A WINTER IDYLL.

EACH of them had married quite the wrong person. Not that they were entitled to any special sympathy on that account, because so many people do the same thing without ever discovering it or suffering any particular inconvenience when they do; but these I speak of very soon had their eyes, which had been shut, wide open, and they never recovered from the shock that attended their awakening.

He—a shy, thoughtful student of one-and-twenty—had married a flighty and vulgar widow of full-blown but still exacting charms, many years older than himself. He had been moved to offer this practical condolence for her estate on finding her one day shedding a rather stale and not undiluted tear over the memory of her defunct partner, whom she had rigorously pursued to a joyful grave with all the ardor of a woman whose mission in life it was to assert her title to transform her home at will into the most infernal Babel of hell-born miseries on earth. She—a dreamy, Shelley-reading girl of seventeen—had married, at the instigation of a jealous mother, a hard, dissolute man of commerce. He had opened a ledger account against her long before their wedding day, and had even entered to her debit half the marriage fees, as well as the whole of the gratuity he had been constrained, out of regard for her feelings, to give a railway guard

on the afternoon of that ceremony, for reserving their carriage from intruders. Neither of these ill-assorted couples had any children, nor had either of the subservient units any friends to speak of, as they did not choose their associates, but submitted callously to those imposed upon them by the repugnant preferences of their respective consorts. They were, of course, both unutterably miserable, and often longed for death as being the simplest solution of the problem of how and where to find happiness, which all would like to guess if they could.

After ten years of helpless and hopeless servitude —he to the jealous caprice and irritable vanity of a middle-aged invalid; she to the brutality, neglect and insult of a worn-out sensualist—they met by chance in a London lecture-room and wandered into an aimless, listless dialogue on some abstract question that had been discussed in the course of the proceedings. They met again from time to time—sometimes in the streets, when he merely raised his hat and passed by; once or twice in the Museum reading-room, to which they both occasionally resorted for curiosity or desultory study; and at last, one cold winter's day, he found her walking on a little frequented part of Hampstead Heath.

She was gazing wildly over the white landscape, wondering why her heart should be frozen as hard as the black puddles in the path, and her youth and beauty muffled in a shroud as immaculate and benumbing as the snow that mantled the broken common. They neither knew nor cared to know each other's name, nor missed the formalities usually antecedent to an acquaintance. They talked gravely, as they surveyed the monotony of the deserted heath, of the current reviews and such like glimmering beacons in the waste of letters, until all

at once, her glance happening to meet his, she found it entangled and caught there. She stared at him steadfastly for a moment, and the usually defiant, almost hard, look in her eyes melted under the earnest sympathy that answered it. The reservoir of secret pain burst through the iron locks of pride and reticence, to well up in the culverts of the soul and find escape for the swollen bitterness of her hidden griefs. As she turned hastily away, he saw, under the shade of the long lashes, a tear roll slowly down her cheek. He said, gently, "Tell me!" and, without preface or hesitation, she straightway told him in a few simple words the whole of her sad history, extenuating nothing of her unhappiness or its causes, and relating particulars of her life which she would sooner have died than have revealed to her mother or sisters. There seemed nothing surprising to her in this; it seemed quite natural and proper that she should confess to this moody, careworn stranger everything—all her most private thoughts, her dead emotions and buried hopes.

She told him how she loathed her husband, with his tongue so foul and habits so evil that she often fancied he must be mad; how he abused and insulted her before his guests, boasting of his infidelities and her subjection to his humors, until her soul and body revolted in writhing anguish against the contaminating bondage which confined her to his roof and side, though she had never uttered one word of complaint to any one, and had even gone out of her way to screen from his family some of his worst excesses, for her pride was affronted at the idea of sympathy for the natural consequences of her mother's wilful carelessness and her own ignorance. Meanwhile, her companion, without interrupting her by any *banale* expression of com-

miseration, listened soberly and attentively to the end, yet she knew somehow that he felt sorely for her troubles, and would have relieved them if he could by any sacrifice in his power. His inarticulate distress comforted her, though she added nothing to her plain relation of facts, and asked for no advice or pity. Then she waited, and as he still said nothing she touched him on the arm. He turned toward her, and, in answer to the inquiry written in her face, told her a story almost as sad as hers, though only a woman can be as sorry for a man's unhappiness as it sometimes merits, and no man, perhaps, can ever feel that his own misfortunes ought to excite as much compassion as a woman's, even if she bear them with more patient resignation and be less easily driven to despair.

When he ceased speaking, she put her gloved hand in his for an instant, but drew it swiftly back. Then she laughed a little bitterly, and said: "Poor creatures! Both wrecked on the barren reefs of our past illusions and held to them by the law. Who shall help and save us?"

It was growing dusk, and they walked slowly back toward the station, where they parted. But, as he saw her into a carriage, she mentioned carelessly that on fine afternoons, even during the cold weather, she sometimes sat and read in Regent's Park, at a spot she described. He understood and thanked her.

On many chill December days subsequently might have been noticed at the place she had indicated a man, seated with his arms folded and his head upon his breast, gazing abstractedly at his boot. Sometimes he had near him a strikingly lovely woman, wrapped in heavy furs, with whom he would intermittently exchange a remark. Often they made no

pretence of conversation, and she would read when the man looked at her instead of at his boot, but with the same, impassive, brooding stare as if they both presented insoluble enigmas. At other times they would talk freely and almost vivaciously upon every conceivable topic, from ethics and religion to sport and natural history, but always in an abstract and impersonal way, as though nothing could ever affect them in their relation to the matter under discussion. If they obviously fell into reminiscences they spoke of events in which they had been concerned as if happening to some dead friend. They never referred again to their mutual confidences, nor, although their meetings were now almost daily, did they yet know each other's name or condition. They were both well informed and widely read, but they disagreed on most subjects on which there could be two opinions. Yet they both had a keen sense that the ruling principle of civil conduct should be duty, though her ideal of its form was drawn rather from doctrine and convention, and his from philosophy and conscience—that is to say, she regarded the criticism of the world and the precepts of the church, while his ideal was less statutory and more regulated by a purely arbitrary code of his own formulation, but pointing to the same conclusions. They were both very likely wrong, but probably his conceptions of the social contract were the more logical of the two. Their communion appeared to be as nearly friendship as could exist between a man of a little over thirty and a woman of great beauty some four years younger. He never shook hands with her nor sat closer to her than the decencies of conversation required; and though she was to him by far the most graceful and desirable woman he had ever seen, he never seemed to regard

her in any other light than as a colloquial antidote to his weariness and more active sources of misery. They both considered their lives as ruined and past amendment, and therefore beyond all useful reference, so they never alluded at all to such unprofitable subjects.

By degrees they began to meet with eagerness and to part with reluctance, shuddering in unison as each silently remembered to what the other was returning. They thought and dreamed of each other simply as "he" or "she," and gradually everything else in their lives faded into a background for their anonymous friendship.

They often now took long walks together, in the environs of the great city during the daytime, or in the evening through its lighted streets, seeming quite indifferent as to whether they might meet those who knew them. As a matter of fact no such a one ever did see them together or had the remotest idea that their hours of freedom were employed in any such ambiguous intercourse.

One clear February night, when the moon was shining and the stars blinking through a sky as black and polished as jet, they strolled on to the top of Primrose Hill and gazed over the humming hive of humanity that linked its busy cells around their feet. They were quite alone and stood together near the railings which surround the summit. She was very pale and her eyes were brighter than usual, for love, until now a stranger, was whispering its secret to her startled brain and knocking wildly for admission to her heart. Suddenly she lost all self-control and succumbed to an involuntary paroxysm of sexual affinity. She held out her arms and stood before him with parted lips and throbbing breast, panting as if she had been running. The man

started, and clung to the cold iron railings with both hands as to an anchor of honor and faith. He looked far away beyond the lights of heaven and earth into a Paradise of love and beauty, more blessed than Adam's and with an Eve more sweet. Then he fled from temptation and hurried down the hill, waiting for his companion at the bottom under a flickering lamp. Presently she rejoined him, still deadly pale but quite composed. She touched his hand mutely for the second time, and he knew it was to show her gratitude for his forbearance and for a sign of love greater than her own.

They spoke no more that evening and soon separated, but next day he told her, though it was scarcely necessary, that he loved her more than death and she replied as calmly that his love for her could be no deeper nor more absolute than hers for him. After a long silence and meditation on this mystery they talked quietly of other things.

They often spoke now of their love for one another and of what they would have done, and of how they would have regulated their time and opportunities if circumstances had been different. Sometimes they disputed eagerly as to whether they should go first to Rome or Venice; where their home should be and whether or not they would keep poultry; while the still more doubtful expediency of pigs and cows was also a subject of much anxious debate. They even had serious disagreements as to the best methods of educating children. Still they never for a moment had the faintest hope that their fanciful speculations could ever have any reality or substance, and they referred to themselves as though they had been characters in a novel, whom the author perversely keeps apart, although the mental vagrancy of an imaginative reader may insist upon a happy

ending, and, overcoming all the obstacles of artistic fiction, bring the straying puppets finally together in a fold of phantom bliss.

At last, one day when she met him, she kept her face turned from him, but, as he noticed it, she went in front of him and raised her veil. He saw a hideous bruise, discoloring one eye and cheek. Without any word of explanation he knew at once what it meant and stood fiercely erect as he grasped his stick more tightly.

"Yes," she said, "I am going to leave him at last, and I must never see you any more."

His breath came hard and short as he hoarsely muttered:

"No, never again; of course not."

When they came to the corner of the street at which they invariably parted—being, he presumed, near her home, though he had never asked her, nor, as some might have done, had ever followed her—he turned to her and in a choking voice and with extreme agitation of manner said,

"Is this really the last time?"

"Yes," she answered softly and sadly, "the last time!"

"And I may not write or hope to hear from you?"

"No, it will be better not for both of us. Stay, though! Give me your name and address."

With bowed head and trembling hand he gave her a card.

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

Three months later he received a letter. It contained only two lines, traced with a faltering hand:

"I am very ill. If I die, darling, you shall hear,

so that you may be glad and know that God is merciful."

After another interval there came a little packet. It held only a piece of brown hair and a small ivory prayer-book, in which was inscribed a girl's name. After it was written by some unknown hand, "Died," and then a date. The date was Midsummer day. *The Tourist.*

THE BACHELOR.

He sits alone within his room,
  And gazes at the dying fire,
Whose fitful flames bear through the gloom
  The burden of his heart's desire.
Sometimes he starts, as if he heard
  A woman's footstep on the stair—
'Twas but a creaking board that stirr'd,
  Unless a spirit lingered there.
But often, as the smoke-wreaths rise,
  Sad fancy comes with all her brood,
He sees a face whose dreamy eyes
  Rebuke him for his solitude.
A woman's garment rustles low,
  His name is murmured by wan lips;
Soft fingers touch his wearied brow,
  And in his own a small hand slips.
Thus sits he, lost in wistful dreams
  Of what the past may never be,
And all his lonely musing seems
  Lit up by fairy phantasy.
While in the wide, wide world somewhere
  Within a chamber where the dim
Soft shadows haunt her eyes and hair,
  Some love-lorn woman waits for him.

The Back Number.

A REVISED VERSION.

CURATE—Have you considered, sir, the new creed propounded by Ian Maclaren?

RECTOR—Yes, but I find that in practice his creed may be condensed into a trinity of words—"gabble," "grab" and "git!"

The Churchman.

REASONING BY INDUCTION.

OLD GABLEIGH (*introduced on the train*)—May I inquire, Miss Brown, where you live?

MISS B.—I have the honor, sir, to reside in——

OLD GABLEIGH—Ah, I see, Boston.

The Guyer.

HAVOC.

REEDER—Didn't the Pope intend to write to Li Hung Chang a letter about the Kucheng massacre?

SERVER—I don't know. But it's a good thing he didn't.

REEDER—Why?

SERVER—'Twould have been a bull in a China shop!

INCULCATION.

JINKS—In the mediæval ages the English courts used to have a "whipping boy" who received the punishment when the princes did anything wrong.

DINKS—That must have made him a painstaking youth.

A VALENTINE.

Oh prithee be my valentine,
  Sweet maid of matchless grace;
Ripe beauty breathes in every line
  And dimple of thy face.
I love within thy pensive smile
  To dream the time away;
Though all mankind thou dost beguile,
  Be mine, be mine, I pray!

Oh be my witching valentine,
  And in thy sunny glance
Let me but linger at thy shrine
  Whose glamours e'er entrance.
Oh glad me with thy glance so sweet,
  So coy and rosy-rare,
And make my life with joy replete,
  Oh damsel more than fair!

Oh be my peerless valentine—
  My angel—and all woe
Shall vanish, and our path shall shine
  With flowers where'er we go.
Romance shall all its joys unfurl
  When hearts and hands we join,
Oh most divine, alluring girl
  Upon the golden coin!

The Impecune.

A DREAM DREAMED OVER.

The music was throbbing and pulsing;
  The flowers and the palms and the lights
In the smooth, waxed floor were reflected
  That glorious gala night.
With the fragrance of roses about her,
  In her dainty, pure white gown,
She was, as he whispered to her,
  "The prettiest girl in town."

She smiled and flushed and denied it,
  As a pretty girl must do,
But by her heart's deep contentment
  She knew that he thought it true;
And they danced to the thrilling music—
  Oh, life was rapture then—
When she was the prettiest girl in town
  And he was the first of men!

They parted with anguished sorrow;
  Time cleared the clouded sky;
But at last night's ball she lived again
  In the charmed days gone by.
His son and *her* daughter were dancing,
  The girl in a pure white gown,
And she heard him say, as they passed her,
  "You're the prettiest girl in town!"

The Flatterer.

LE PRINCE S'AMUSE.

It reads like one of Hans Andersen's fairy tales; all princes, marchionesses and daughters of kings. It ends in wedding bells and *evvivas* for Vittorio Emanuele di Savoia, the young Prince of Naples. But for the lovely Marchesa di Gerace, raving in desolate solitude in Northern Italy, the story will close with the black stroke of Death.

Like Andersen's poor little mermaid, la Marchesa di Gerace once cradled the yellow-haired prince's head on her passionate breast, and shook her black locks over his eyes to make him forget the stern light of his crown. Then, having worn this royal flower on her heart, she would wear no other.

La Gerace was the most beautiful woman in Naples. Over her pale, seignorial brow rolled the triumphant wave of her dark hair; her figure was that of a naiad from her own Grotta Azzurra, corseted by Josselin; and her mouth, "the downward crescent of her mouth," was like a greedy rose.

The young Prince fell to his knees under the compulsion of her nocturnal eyes. To her sleepy, crimson lips he gave the frail blue flower of his blood, and to her Luxorian apartments in Via Calabritto the flashing flowers of the Villa Reale—biblical roses and fabulous carnations, fulgent anemones blown in the winds of wonderland, mysterious and gigantic lilies with deep and shadowy hearts.

All the other Duchesses and Marchionesses, Countesses and Baronesses of Naples were jealous. They got up at improbable hours—as early as 10

A. M.—wound their indocile locks in tight, unbecoming plaits on the back of their heads, and sheated their unruly figures in straight riding-habits. Cantering listlessly round the *trottoir*, they waited for the *Principino* and his chestnut mare to appear, and then bore down on him like a troop of *fin de siècle* Walkyrie, disputing his boyish smile and his kingly salute.

But the mermaid-Marchioness in her Luxorian apartments slept late, slept among her unrolled tresses and her fabulous flowers, like Freiligrath's maiden in "Die Blumen Rache," pale and unafraid.

Far away in the Montenegrin hills the daughter of a monarch grew up, healthy as a peasant girl, wild, beautiful and strong.

The mermaid-Marchioness had a husband whom she loved a long while ago. She had a brother-in-law whom she had loved a little while ago, and she had Prince Charming, her fairy-tale lover, whom she loved now.

Alas! The husband discovered the brother-in-law and left his little mermaid-wife. The brother-in-law discovered Prince Charming and left his little mermaid-mistress. And Prince Charming discovered the existence of the healthy Montenegrin Princess and left his little mermaid-slave.

The mermaid cut off all her long, black hair, the useless hair that had not blinded the Prince, nor bound the lover, nor strangled the husband. Then she tried to throw herself out of the window.

The ogres in authority packed up her Josselin corsets, her improbable underwear, her unlikely dresses, her unverisimilar hats, and sent them and her away to Florence, a dreadful city, full of English people and windy street-corners. There the little mermaid lost her reason.

In the Villa Reale in Naples, the boyish Prince wanders with his hand in the hand of the healthy Montenegrin Princess.

"What a pretty garden," says the Montenegrin Princess. "But when I am Queen I shall plant more useful things. Cabbages here," pointing to the biblical roses, "and artichokes here," pointing to the fabulous carnations. "Here chickory, which is good for the blood," waving her hand over the fulgent anemones, blown in the winds of wonderland. "And here asparagus," she says, laughing at the mysterious and gigantic lilies with deep and shadowy hearts.

The Cosmopolite.

TO A COFFEE CUP.

INSENSATE, brittle thing, thou canst not guess
The envy that thy fate has roused in me;
For thou who hast no heart, nor eyes to see,
Canst never know my lady's loveliness.

When to thy dainty lip her red lips press,
Thou wilt not thrill with tender ecstasy;
Nor know my heart would burst with joy, if she
Would deign to give my lips a like caress!

That thou shalt kiss that mouth I envy thee,
And that, when near unto her eyes of gray,
Thou canst not read the pensive mystery
That holds my absent heart in their sweet sway;
And yet, alike at last our fates must be,
For she will break my heart, and thee, some day.

The Prophet.

THE FIRE FIEND.

A STRANGER from out of town registered at the Astor House. He kept himself somewhat conspicuously in the public eye until 10 o'clock at night. As that hour approached he glued his eye on the large clock in the rotunda, and on the dot he rushed up to the clerk's desk and demanded in excited tones:

"Ish der a delegram for me?"

"No, Mr. Geisenheimer, there is no telegram for you."

That satisfied him for another ten minutes, when he rushed in and asked:

"Ish der a delegram for me?"

"No, sir, no telegram."

Ten minutes later in he jumped:

"Vere ish dat delegram for Mr. Geisenheimer?"

The clerk was very tired by this time.

"There is no telegram for you. When one comes I will send it to your room."

"All right."

But in a quarter of an hour in bounced Mr. Geisenheimer, as anxious for a telegram as ever. The clerk cooled him down and then got ready for the next attack. He folded a blank message form, put it in a telegraph envelope, sealed it and addressed it to Mr. Geisenheimer. He was after it in ten minutes. With eager hands he tore open the envelope, drew out the blank, and as he opened it rolled up his eyes and exclaimed:

"Mein Gott, mein Gott, my shtore ish all burnt oop!"

The Smiler.

THE TRYST.

THROUGH the moonlit garden
  Like a ghost I've crept.
(Unsuspecting Auntie
  In the hammock slept.)

Now the spooky orchard
  Spreads before my view;
Teddy, I'd not cross it
  For any one but you!

Something's on my ankle!
  Surely it's a snake!
Oh, a hand has caught me!
  No, it's just the rake.

Oh, I'm slipping—sliding
  On a fallen pear!
That's a tramp, I know it,
  Crouching over there!

Toads and worms and lizards
  Scramble in the dew;
I shall die of terror—
  Teddy—*Is* it you?

The Sympathizer.

INSTEAD OF "OLD WOMAN."

"WHAT do you suppose Adam called Eve?"

"If he was up to date he probably called her his 'living picture'."

The Benedict.

RIGHT UP TO DATE.

DICHORY—Putting a man into stocks was an old form of punishment, wasn't it?

HICHORY—Old? Say, were you ever in Wall street?

The Lamb.

THE YOUNG LAWYER'S FIRST CASE.

"I'VE won my first case," said young Blackstone to a couple of his friends at the club.

"We didn't know you even had a client," replied one of them. "Tell us about it."

"Well, I bet Barrowcliff a case of beer, and I won it."

Whereupon the other two rose up against him and cast him out.

The Barrister.

SEVERE.

HE—I was taking off my hat to a lady the other day when a fellow came along and struck it a blow that crushed it down to nothing.

SHE—Then you had had time to get it back on your head?

The Stinger.

TRUE PHILOSOPHY.

To dream about the life to come
  Is stupid, tiresome, slow;
It's better far to make things hum
  In the life that's on the go.

The High Roller.

The Oldest Champagne in the World.

RUINART

the winner of the first and only award for Brut Champagne in the World's Fair, Chicago, 1893.

HAIG & HAIG,

DISTILLERS SINCE 1679.

Three Star Scots Whisky

The Finest Whisky Imported.

ROOSEVELT & SCHUYLER, SOLE AGENTS.

PENNSYLVANIA

ROUTE

IS THE

FAVORITE LINE

BETWEEN ALL THE

COMMERCIAL CENTRES

EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

AND EMBRACES IN ITS

CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPMENT AND OPERATION

ALL PERFECTIONS KNOWN TO MODERN SCIENCE

TANIS

THE SANG-DIGGER

AMÉLIE RIVES

Handsomely bound in paper cover, portrait of Tanis, 50 cents.

Cloth, 12mo gilt, gilt top, untrimmed front and foot, price, $1.50. All leading booksellers, or sent prepaid, on receipt of price, by

Town Topics,

208 FIFTH AVENUE

And

1128 BROADWAY,

New York.

"Sat still A'll pick hit up!"

LIST OF BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY

Town Topics Publishing Company

208 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

Any of which will be sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, paper edition, 50 cents each

6. **The Sale of a Soul**, by C. M. S. McLellan.
7. **The Cousin of the King**, by A. S. Van Westrum.
8. **Six Months in Hades**, by Clarice Irene Clingham.
9. **The Skirts of Chance**, by Captain Alfred Thompson.
10. **Anthony Kent**, by Charles Stokes Wayne.
11. **An Eclipse of Virtue**, by Champion Bissell.
12. **An Unspeakable Siren**, by John Gilliat.
13. **That Dreadful Woman**, by Harold R. Vynne.
14. **A Deal in Denver**, by Gilmer McKendree.
15. **Why? Says Gladys**, by David Christie Murray.
16. **A Very Remarkable Girl**, by L. H. Bickford.
17. **A Marriage for Hate**, by Harold R. Vynne.
18. **Out of the Sulphur**, by T. C. DeLeon.
19. **The Wrong Man**, by Champion Bissell.
20. **The Hunt for Happiness**, by Anita Vivanti Chartres.
21. **Her Strange Experiment**, by Harold R. Vynne.
22. **On the Altar of Passion**, by John Gilliat.
23. **A Martyr to Love**, by Joanna E. Wood.
24. **Princess Enigma**, by Clinton Ross.
25. **Fetters that Sear**, by Harold R. Vynne.
26. **The Ashes of Desire**, by John Louis Berry, Jr.
27. **Margaret's Misadventure**, by Adrian Schade Van Westrum.
28. **The Kiss That Killed**, by Percival Pollard.
29. **Paint and Petticoats**, by John Gilliat.
30. **A Witch of To-Day**, by Charles Stokes Wayne.
31. **Half a Wife**, by Louise Winter.
32. **Sweet Sin**, by T. Ledyard Smith.
33. **The Famine of Hearts**, by Anne MacGregor.

Tanis, the Sang-Digger, by Amelie Rives.
Cloth, $1.50. Paper, 50 cents.

Through Troubled Waters, by Mrs. F. J. A. Darr, 50 cents.

Reveries of a Widow, by Teresa Dean,
Cloth, $1.50. Paper, 50 cents.

LEAVE NEW YORK

5.30 P. M.

ARRIVE CHICAGO

4.30 P. M. next day,

by the New York Central's "Lake Shore Limited." The most comfortable and luxurious long-distance train in the world.

1,000 MILES IN 24 HOURS.

A booklet on the "Lake Shore Limited," containing also a novel and unique descriptive time table of this wonderful train, will be sent free by addressing George H. Daniels, General Passenger Agent, Grand Central Station, New York.

TOWN TOPICS is universally recognized as the most complete weekly journal for men and women in the world. It is *par excellence* the society journal of America, and is unique inasmuch as all its matter is original. *The Saunterer* discusses weekly the doings of society in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and all the other large cities in the Union. He serves you with the latest news of society in Europe, reviews events of the week in his pungent style, gives you his ideas on men and women of the day, and generally concludes his series of paragraphs with notes on current politics.

A special feature of TOWN TOPICS is its short stories. They are by the best writers of Europe and America, always strong, clever, pretty and clean. Amélie Rives wrote for it her great serial story "Tanis, the Sang-Digger." Julian Hawthorne, Edgar Fawcett, Bret Harte, Walter Besant, Eden Philpotts, Gertrude Atherton, Gilbert Parker, Rudyard Kipling, Ambrose Bierce, etc., are among its contributors.

The financial department, "Other People's Money," "Out of the Earth" and "Wall Street Whispers," is read by all prominent bankers and capitalists, and on questions of finance TOWN TOPICS is considered an authority.

Leading books of the day are reviewed by *The Onlooker* in "The Literary Show" in an unexcelled manner—clever, humorous, pungent and fearless.

The lover of sport finds great interest in *The Referee's* discussions under the title of "Afield and Afloat." He writes on yachting, rowing, football, shooting, bicycling, etc., and his *confrère, The Veteran*, takes care to keep you posted on horse-racing.

THE miscellaneous matter of TOWN TOPICS consists of poems, clever and bright, comic and tragic, by the best poets of the day; among them Bliss Carman, Frank L. Stanton, Harold R. Vynne, etc., burlesques, jokes, witticisms, etc., by the cleverest humorists of the day, among them Ed. Mott, R. K. Munkittrick, etc.

TOWN TOPICS has always been famed especially for its bold, independent and masterly dramatic and musical criticisms.

Its art editor is a conscientious critic, and may be relied upon for latest items from the world of painting and sculpture.

The army and navy receive such frequent attention that TOWN TOPICS is read by all officers of both services, and found at the army posts and naval stations and aboard ships in commission.

The price of a single copy is 10 cents, and it is for sale at all newsstands, at railroad depots and on trains. You can subscribe for it for $4 per year, six and three months *pro rata;* clubbed with "TALES FROM TOWN TOPICS," $5 per year. Your book and news dealer will take your subscription, or you can order it direct from the publishers, 208 Fifth avenue, New York.

"TALES FROM TOWN TOPICS," a quarterly now in its sixth year, is issued on the first day of March, June, September, and December. It is 12mo, 256 pages. A complete novel, by some well-known author, leads each number; the remainder of the volume is made up by selections of the smartest short stories, burlesques, poems, witticisms, etc., from the issues of TOWN TOPICS so far back as to make the re-publication fresh reading.

It sells for 50 cents. A year's subscription is $2. Clubbed with TOWN TOPICS the price is $5 per year for both. Among its series of prize stories are:

6 "The Sale of a Soul." By C. M. S. McLellan.

7 "The Cousin of the King." By Adrian Schade Van Westrum.

8 "Six Months in Hades." By Clarice Irene Clingham.

9 "The Skirts of Chance." By Captain Alfred Thompson.

10 "Anthony Kent." By Charles Stokes Wayne.

11 "An Eclipse of Virtue." By Champion Bissell.

12 "An Unspeakable Siren." By John Gilliatt.

13 "That Dreadful Woman." By Harold R. Vynne.

14 "A Deal in Denver." By Gilmer McAendree.

15 "'Why?' says Gladys." By David Christie Murray.

16 "A Very Remarkable Girl." By L. H. Bickford.

17 "A Marriage for Hate." By Harold R. Vynne.

18 "Out of the Sulphur." By T. C. DeLeon.

19 "The Wrong Man." By Champion Bissell.

It is also issued bound in handsome library style, two numbers in a volume, heavy marbled cover, leather back and corners, marbled edges, at the price of $1.50 per volume; $3 for each year's issues, or $14.00 for the set of Twenty Numbers.

LIBRARY EDITION

OF

TALES FROM TOWN TOPICS

A limited edition of the **Twenty-Six Numbers**, beginning September, '91, bound two numbers in a volume, handsome library style, heavy marbled covers, leather back and corners, marbled edges, at $1.50 per volume, $3.00 for each year's issues, or $19.00 for the set of **Twenty-Six Numbers**, sent postage paid.

LIBRARY EDITION OF

TOWN TOPICS

We have a few volumes handsomely bound in cloth, leather backs and corners, and marbled edges, at the following prices: 1887 and 1888, $12.00; 1889, $10.00; 1890, $9.00; 1891 and 1892, $8.00; 1893, 1894 and 1895, $7.00; 1896, 1897, $6.00 per volume (two volumes per year). Usual discount to the trade and public libraries.

TOWN TOPICS

208 Fifth Avenue and 1123 Broadway, New York.

FEB 1 1940